

Selected Poems of
GEORGE HERBERT

with a few representative poems
by his contemporaries

*arranged, with an introduction,
notes, and glossary, by*
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Prefatory Note

I have chosen and arranged these poems of Herbert to serve as an approach, no more an approach to Herbert's achievement, and through Herbert one possible approach to the nature and achievement of English poetry in the first half of the seventeenth century. The poems have been so grouped as to start on familiar ground, and to lead, by way of an appreciation of his characteristic idiom, to some of the finest examples of that part of his work which can most directly address those who do not share the poet's beliefs—as well as those who do. An appreciation of a few of these poems (the third group in this arrangement) is likely to win from the reader something of that respect, and 'suspension of disbelief', necessary for a profitable approach to the last group.

The introductory material is merely introductory: a short biographical sketch, a look at Herbert through contemporary eyes, and a few very general suggestions about the context in which to read his poems. Readers are invited to go straight from this to their own preliminary study of the poems. That is why the editor's short critical commentary appears after them instead of in the Introduction. The discussion is confined for the most part to undeveloped suggestions, and lines of enquiry, it is intended primarily to stimulate close attention, but it does include a more detailed study of one representative poem from each of the four groups. The notes that follow also seek, in a more random and shorthand way, to direct attention, perhaps to place the weight here rather than there, but not to supply ready-made answers, to engage difficulties but not necessarily to solve

them. The glossary, on the other hand, is intended to go some way at least towards answers and solutions. Herbert works so skilfully and knowingly with the deep grain of our language, that readers are advised to be continually wary about his words, and to consult either the glossary or a good dictionary frequently. One can very well manage without editorial criticism and notes, and so much the better, but with poetry of this time and tradition, it is safe to say, one cannot manage without a dictionary.

The double conviction, that a poet cannot be well studied in isolation from his best contemporaries, and that Herbert's poetry can serve admirably as an approach to a wider and deeper study of 'metaphysical poetry' generally, has led me to include with each group of Herbert's poems two or three representative and comparable poems by others: those from whom he learnt, those whom his own poetry affected, and those among his peers whose related, but different, work can begin to make us really conscious of a 'tradition'. With the equivocal exception of the last poem in the book, however, choice from the poetry of Herbert's contemporaries has been confined to what they would have called 'divine poems', some principle of selection was necessary, and the adoption of this principle may make comparative reading more profitable.

Some of the most helpful and suggestive insights from published criticism of Herbert have been quoted in the notes on certain poems. I had in mind that particular perceptions about particular poems are more germane to real appreciation than paragraphs and passages excerpted and quoted *en bloc* as 'what the critics say' and thus given a rather weighty and dogmatic prestige. I have been directed and assisted in many ways, both over the years and in the preparation of this edition, by published work on Herbert and his contemporaries. The suggestions for further reading at the end of the notes will indicate some of my sources. I wish, though, to acknowledge a special debt to Canon Hutchinson's edition of Herbert's *Works*.

D. B

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INTRODUCTION

A short biographical portrait

'Of noble birth'

George Herbert was born in 1593, in Montgomery. He was the fifth son of Richard and Magdalen Herbert, of an ancient aristocratic family long distinguished in public life, proud and ambitious. His elder brother Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, achieved the greater contemporary fame, and he was the more typical of the family—courtier, diplomat, poet, philosopher, writer. His father died when George Herbert was three, and his widowed mother, the remarkable Lady Magdalen Herbert, devoted herself to the education and guidance of her children. She was a lady of the finest intelligence, sensitive and perceptive, a devoted Christian, the admired friend of such eminent men as Dr John Donne the poet and preacher. George Herbert has left his own record of the care and order of his mother's style of life; her practical charity, her love of music, of serious conversation and correspondence, and also her love to her family, and her severity in directing their paths. The boy was educated at Westminster School, whose reputation for classical studies stood particularly high. He was already a scholar marked out for distinction when he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of seventeen.

'The excellent endowments of his minde'

At the university he quickly distinguished himself. He became a Fellow of Trinity and a college lecturer. His studies were in

classics and divinity equally, in rhetoric, and in Latin and English verse. It seems that his mother had early prepared him for the vocation of holy orders, but from this step periodically his nature drew back, not that he diminished his allegiance to the Church, or his studies in theology. From a resolve early expressed in two sonnets he sent his mother, to dedicate his skill in language to the pursuit of sacred poetry, however, he never drew back. During the Cambridge years he composed many of the first drafts of poems later to take their place in his one volume of poetry, *The Temple*, published after his death. These poems circulated, as was usual, in manuscript, and Herbert's reputation began to grow, both in Cambridge and in the court circles of London: he became known as a poet and an intellectual, as a lecturer and a wit. He was good-looking, and graced with attractive manners. His high birth, his fine presence, and his brilliance of mind combined to advance him in the world. But he began, even so early, to suffer from ill-health and consequent periods of despondency. He lived well, not without some vanity and ostentation, especially in dress, a sense of his own unusual powers combined with the drives of ambition native to his family. He seems at this time not to have been troubled by any sense of discrepancy between the claims of his faith and the possibilities of greatness in the world. From his first university office of Reader in Rhetoric, he aspired to become Public Orator for the sake of the prestige of that office, and the likelihood of advancing through it towards eventual civil power. To a friend's comment that 'this place, being civil, may divert me too much from Divinity, at which not without cause he thinks I aim', his response was to detect 'no such earthiness' in the office, 'but it may very well be joyn'd with Heaven'. He used every influence he could command to secure the office, and in 1620 he did secure it.

'A laudible ambition to be something more than he then was'

He remained Public Orator in Cambridge University for seven years, but for the last three or four of those years he was infre-

quently at Cambridge, bent rather upon court preferment in London. We do not know, and can only conjecture, the vacillations, tensions perhaps, that he experienced between the call of holy orders and the new opportunities for power and place apparent to him. But by the time of King James's death in 1625 the lure of public distinction and power had lost its hold upon him. He had stood high in the King's favour, although family and parliamentary dissensions in which he was involved placed him in an equivocal position, more so with King Charles, although his court was more serious and better conducted, and more likely to command Herbert's real allegiance. His distinguished brother was temporarily under a cloud in court circles, and he seems to have become disillusioned with the political world through his membership of Parliament and his increasing insight into court ways. The terrible plague in London may have had some deep effect upon him, so, even more, may the retirement from 'the world' of his friend Nicholas Ferrar, who was ordained deacon, and withdrew with his family to Little Gidding. Probably behind all these sources of unease was a loss of that earlier conviction that divinity and civil power could be joined so naturally, an increasing doubt of the ideal he had held, of union between Church and State in high affairs.

However these and other causes may have worked upon him, Herbert went into retirement for a while, and made a resolve for holy orders. In 1626 he was ordained deacon, and accepted some minor offices in the Church that did not commit him to parochial life. It was a decisive step to have taken for a man of his high birth, who had attained to such eminence as he had. It debarred him from further civil advancement. There is little doubt that Dr John Donne, now Dean of St Paul's, who had passed through conflicts of his own and who was much with Herbert during a part of his retirement, encouraged and advised him. His mother was near the end of her life, in poor health and given to melancholy, and this, too, probably affected her son's decision. Ill-health continued to take its toll of him. 'About the 34th year of his Age,' Walton reports, 'Mr Herbert was seized with a sharp

quotidian Ague, and thought to remove it by a change of air' He continued to live in retirement as a private gentleman, to build up his health and to dispose his heart finally towards the obscure and modest life of a parish priest 'He had heard sober men censure him,' said a contemporary, 'as a man that did not manage his brave parts to his best advantage and preferment, but lost himself in an humble way' Inevitably a man of such innate pride and such endowments of mind and personality as Herbert found difficulty in reconciling himself to such a verdict He had always been given to self-searching, and even in his earlier university years was subject to periods of despondency and uncertain mood His instincts and temperament, 'not exempt from passion and choler', could not be easily subdued to the simple and exemplary calling to which he now aspired To these years many of the poems in *The Temple* reflecting inner division probably belong He was held back from accepting a parish both by a sense of unworthiness, and by that absolute allegiance to the tenets of his Faith and Church which made him 'apprehensive of the last great Account that he was to make for the Cure of so many souls' His health recovered, he married Jane Danvers, a lady of one of the great Wiltshire families, who thus shared with him the 'losing himself in an humble way', and in 1630 accepted the living of Bemerton, near Salisbury

'The great sanctity of the short remainder of his holy life'

The two churches at Bemerton were small, undistinguished, and (like the rectory itself) in need of repair Out of his own means, Herbert restored all three, he made a home for the orphaned daughters of his sister Margaret Vaughan, he became chaplain to the Earl of Pembroke and his countess, and he maintained a curate Once he had accepted its full implications, Herbert's dedication to his calling became almost legendary Such tributes as that of his friend Ferrar, which was published as preface to *The Temple* and appeared only one year after his death, sufficiently attest the facts of his sanctity and reputation. 'His life,'

wrote his more famous brother, 'was most holy and exemplary; insomuch that about Salisbury, where he lived, beneficed for many years, he was little less than sainted' His inward conflicts seem to have been much quieted when he went to Bemerton, but echoes remained and neither ill-health nor those varying moods of despondency left him undisturbed for long More than half the poems of *The Temple* were composed during the three years of his rectory at Bemerton, he used the poet's art not only as a means to consecrate his praise and devotion, but also to clarify and resolve the tensions within that passionate and complex personality of his, and again (as Canon Hutchinson suggests), to offer a defence against pain and weakness, by making music of his suffering and disappointment That he entrusted his book of poems to his dearest friend, Nicholas Ferrar, when he felt the approach of death, shows what value he set upon his poetry. He continued to study and to compose extensively (not all his writings survived), and 'to give himself a mark to aim at' he wrote *A Priest to the Temple, or The Country Parson, His Character and Rule of Holy Life*, a practical manual of the priestly life in a small parish

Twice daily he said the offices in his little church He seems indeed to have been, to his parishioners, the exemplar of the priest's life that he sought to become accessible to all, tender to the impoverished and unhappy, a sensitive friend and yet a stern guide, seriously assuming the responsibility for the souls of all in his charge It was an achievement of character, for the poems, and all other evidences, suggest that he remained, within, the turbulent and passionate spirit of earlier years, a true descendant of the Herbert clan After only three years of ministry, illness and bodily weakness set increasing limits to his pastoral activity. He died in 1632, of consumption, at the age of forty

II Early records

Passages from Walton's 'Life'

. In that year he was also made *Master of Arts*, he being then in the 22nd year of his Age, during all which time, all, or the greatest diversion from his Study, was the practice of Musick, in which he became a great Master, and of which, he would say, 'That it did relieve his drooping spirits, compose his distracted thoughts, and raised his weary soul so far above Earth, that it gave him an earnest of the joys of Heaven, before he posset them' And it may be noted, that from his first entrance into the Colledge, the generous Dr *Nevil* was a cherisher of his Studies, and such a lover of his person, his behaviour, and the excellent endowments of his mind, that he took him often into his own company, by which he confirm'd his native gentleness, and, if during this time he expresst any Error, it was, that he kept himself too much retir'd, and at too great a distance with all his inferiours and his cloaths seem'd to prove, that he put too great a value on his parts and Parentage

In this place of *Orator* our *George Herbert* continued eight years, and manag'd it with as becoming, and grave a gaiety, as any had ever before, or since his time For He had acquir'd great Learning, and was blest with a high fancy, a civil and sharp wit, and with a natural elegance, both in his behaviour, his tongue, and his pen

. . In this time of being *Orator*, he had learnt to understand the *Italian*, *Spanish*, and *French* Tongues very perfectly, hoping, that as his Predecessors, so he might in time attain the place of

a *Secretary of State*, he being at that time very high in the Kings favour, and not meanly valued and lov'd by the most eminent and most powerful of the Court-Nobility This, and the love of a Court-conversation mixt with a laudible ambition to be something more than he then was, drew him often from *Cambridge* to attend the *King* wheresoever the Court was, who then gave him a *Sine Cure*, which fell into his Majesties disposal, I think, by the death of the Bishop of *St Asaph* It was the same, that Queen *Elizabeth* had formerly given to her Favourite Sir *Philp Sidney*, and valued to be worth an hundred and twenty pound *per Annum* With this, and his Annuity, and the advantage of his Colledge, and of his Oratorship, he enjoyed his gentile humour for cloaths, and Court-like company, and seldom look'd towards *Cambridge*, unless the King were there, but then he never fail'd

When at his Induction he was shut into *Bemerton Church*, being left there alone to Toll the Bell (as the Law requires him) he staid so much longer than an ordinary time, before he return'd to those Friends that staid expecting him at the Church-door, that his Friend, Mr *Woodnot*, look'd in at the Church-window, and saw him lie prostrate on the ground before the Altar at which time and place (as he after told Mr *Woodnot*) he set some Rules to himself, for the future manage of his life, and then and there made a vow, to labour to keep them

And by this account of his diligence, to make his Parishioners understand what they pray'd, and why they prais'd, and ador'd their Creator I hope I shall the more easily obtain the Readeis belief to the following account of Mr *Herberts* own practice, which was, to appear constantly with his Wife, and three Nieces (the daughters of a deceased Sister) and his whole Family, twice every day at the Church-prayers, in the Chappel which does almost joyn to his Paisonage-house And for the time of his appearing, it was strictly at the Canonical hours of 10 and 4, and then and there, he lifted up pure and charitable

hands to God in the midst of the Congregation And he would joy to have spent that time in that place, where the honour of his *Master Jesus* dwelleth, and there, by that inward devotion which he testified constantly by an humble behaviour, and visible adoration, he, like *Josua* brought not only *his own Household thus to serve the Lord*, but brought most of his Parishioners, and many Gentlemen in the Neighbourhood, constantly to make a part of his Congregation twice a day, and some of the meaner sort of his Parish, did so love and reverence Mr *Herbert*, that they would let their Plow rest when Mr *Herberts Saints-Bell* rung to Prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him and would then return back to their Plow And his most holy life was such, that it begot such reverence to God, and to him, that they thought themselves the happier, when they carried Mr *Herberts* blessing back with them to their labour —Thus powerful was his reason, and example, to perswade others to a practical piety, and devotion . .

His chiefest recreation was Musick, in which heavenly Art he was a most excellent Master, and did himself compose many *divine Hymns* and *Anthems*, which he set and sung to his *Lute* or *Viol*, and though he was a lover of retiredness, yet his love to *Musick* was such, that he went usually twice every week on certain appointed days, to the *Cathedral Church* in *Salisbury*, and at his return would say, *That his time spent in Prayer, and Cathedral Musick, elevated his Soul, and was his Heaven upon Earth* But before his return thence to *Bemerton*, he would usually sing and play his part, at an appointed private Musick-meeting, and, to justify this practice, he would often say, *Religion does not banish Mirth, but only moderates, and sets rules to it*

. In another walk to *Salisbury*, he saw a poor man, with a poorer horse, that was fall'n under his Load, they were both in distress, and needed present help, which Mr *Herbert* perceiving, put off his Canonical Coat, and help'd the poor man to unload, and after, to load his horse The poor man blest him for it and

he blest the poor man, and was so like the good Samaritan, that he gave him money to refresh both himself and his horse, and told him, *That if he lov'd himself he should be merciful to his Beast* — Thus he left the poor man, and at his coming to his musical friends at Salisbury, they began to wonder that Mr George Herbert which us'd to be so trim and clean, came into that company so soyl'd and discompos'd, but he told them the occasion And when one of the company told him, *He had disparag'd himself by so dirty an employment*, his answer was, *That the thought of what he had done, would prove Musick to him at Midnight, and that the omission of it, would have upbraided and made discord in his Conscience, whensoever he should pass by that place, for, if I be bound to pray for all that be in distress, I am sure that I am bound so far as it is in my power to practise what I pray for And though I do not wish for the like occasion every day, yet let me tell you, I would not willingly pass one day of my life without comforting a sad soul, or shewing mercy, and I praise God for this occasion And now let's tune our Instruments*

. . Mr Duncon, according to his promise, return'd from Bath the fifth day, and then found Mr Herbert much weaker than he left him and therefore their Discourse could not be long, but at Mr Duncons parting with him, Mr Herbert spoke to this purpose—*Sir, I pray give my brother Farrer an account of the decaying condition of my body, and tell him, I beg him to continue his daily prayers for me and let him know, that I have consider'd, That God only is what he would bee, and that I am by his grace become now so like him, as to be pleas'd with what pleaseth him, and tell him, that I do not repine but am pleas'd with my want of health, and tell him, my heart is fixt on that place where true joy is only to be found, and that I long to be there, and do wait for my appointed change with hope and patience Having said this, he did with so sweet a humility as seem'd to exalt him, bow down to Mr. Duncon, and with a thoughtful and contented look, say to him,—Sir, I pray deliver this little Book to my dear brother Farrer, and tell him, he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my*

Master in whose service I have now found perfect freedom, desire him to read it, and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul, let it be made Publick if not, let him burn it for I and it, are less than the least of God's mercies — Thus meanly did this humble man think of this excellent Book, which now bears the name of *The TEMPLE Or, Sacred Poems, and Private Ejaculations*, of which, Mr Farrer would say, *There was in it the picture of a divine Soul in every page, and that the whole Book was such a harmony of Holy passions, as would enrich the World with pleasure and piety* And it appears to have done so for there have been more than Twenty thousand of them sold since the first Impression

From Ferrar's Preface to '*The Temple*'

The dedication of this work having been made by the Authour to the *Divine Majestie* onely, how should we now presume to interest any mortall man in the patronage of it? Much lesse think we it meet to seek the recommendation of the Muses, for that which himself was confident to have been inspired by a diviner breath then flows from *Helicon* The world therefore shall receive it in that naked simplicitie, with which he left it, without any addition either of support or ornament, more then is included in it self We leave it free and unforestalled to every mans judgement, and to the benefit that he shall find by perusall Onely for the clearing of some passages, we have thought it not unfit to make the common Reader privie to some few particularities of the condition and disposition of the Person,

Being nobly born, and as eminently endued with gifts of the munde, and having by industrie and happy education perfected them to that great height of excellencie, whereof his fellowship of Trinitie Colledge in Cambridge, and his Orator-ship in the Universitie, together with that knowledge which the Kings Court had taken of him, could make relation farre above ordinarie Quitting both his deserts and all the opportunities that he had for worldly preferment, he betook himself to the Sanctuarie

and Temple of God, choosing rather to serve at Gods Altar, then to seek the honour of State-employments As for those inward enforcements to this course (for outward there was none) which many of these ensuing verses bear witnesse of, they detract not from the freedome, but adde to the honour of this resolution in him As God had enabled him, so he accounted him meet not onely to be called, but to be compelled to this service Wherein his faithfull discharge was such, as may make him justly a companion to the primitive Saints, and a pattern or more for the age he lived in

To testifie his independencie upon all others, and to quicken his diligence in this kinde, he used in his ordinarie speech, when he made mention of the blessed name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to adde, *My Master* .

III A brief note on the social and literary setting

A glance through the biographical portrait, and a savouring of Walton's and Ferrar's reports, will give the reader a sufficient feeling for Herbert's times to enable the poetry to speak more clearly. The court at London is the hub of English life, the focus of every kind of art and literature, as well as of political energy and intrigue. The King's sovereignty is still real, and the power of the old nobility and their cultural responsibilities are real also, but far-reaching economic changes have transferred wealth to merchant adventurers and city speculators, and aristocratic power is no longer impregnable. The Church of England, accommodating the double claims of puritanism and the old catholic tradition, is both a spiritual and a secular force in the land, and some part of both those traditions can be seen affecting such men as Herbert. Religion is still a paramount concern in all walks of life but in university and city circles, the new Learning, the spirit of sceptical inquiry, the energetic delight in intellectual adventure, have modified the older patterns of theology and belief and loosened many bonds, so, in other ways, have such factors as the increasing interest in self-analysis, the deeper and sharper self-consciousness prevalent among the highly educated, the cult of melancholy, and the economic uncertainties of the time. To compose and read poetry is still an educated nobleman's expected skill and pleasure. Lord Herbert of Cherbury, combining diplomacy, philosophy and poetry, and achieving distinction in all three, is eminent but characteristic. Poems circulate in manuscript within a fairly small élite drawn from city, university, and court. Distinction of mind, wit and verbal skill, and

intellectual rigour in conversation and writing, are admired. A common education, a common training in rhetoric—the skills of speech for argument, persuasion, and expression—bind together this select circle of readers, writers, thinkers and talkers. Herbert's own training and high repute in rhetoric, in the forms and styles of composition, are something his public appreciates and admires.

That is one of the first points to take about the literary setting for these poems. Herbert's verse is that of a consummate rhetorician. Its sharp wit, and evident delight in the free play of the mind, derive partly from the court and university environment, but much more from the new style and fashion in love poetry and divine poetry, whose presiding genius was John Donne. Whether the apparent subject be flippant or highly serious, an energetic intellectual passion distinguishes this style, 'the intellect is at the tips of the senses', mental dexterity fuses with nervous excitement or with feelings of sight, hearing, smell. As a result, a new and wider range of human experiences becomes material for poetic art, for illumination by image, by emblem, or by logical analogue. The mind's interests, particularly, become the very stuff of poetry: hence (in part) the application of the general term 'metaphysical poetry' to the style Donne inaugurates and Herbert, in his own way, delights in.

But delight in paradox and irony, and dexterous analogies, had long had a place in the Christian tradition, it was a way of discerning the central Christian truths themselves. Donne—and much more, Herbert—are not altogether innovators here, their divine poetry has to be read against a background of sacred commentary, of catholic liturgy, and the achievement of an earlier poet like Southwell. And immediately behind another facet of the 'new style' is something even more significant: the great age of English drama, of dramatic blank verse. Herbert's age is the age of Shakespeare, the Shakespearean mode, and the language of the London stage, contribute the most powerful backing to that most lively power of the metaphysicals—their subtle mastery of the rhythms in all the varieties of human speech, their skill in

playing off the colloquial impetus of the voice against a formal metrical pattern. Another influential figure should be named here who in his person unites the art of poetic drama with the art of lyric poetry. Ben Jonson. He exercised upon the attitudes poets took up towards their subjects, and upon the skills of versification, an influence out of proportion to his own achievement in lyric poetry—vigorous and incisive though that is. He established a direction complementary to that pioneered by Donne, towards classical refinement and terse exactitude, towards a blending of sharply pointed and racy speech with graceful forms and a genial yet cultivated manner. How well Herbert's accomplishment fits this mould, too, will easily become apparent, but a poet of an older generation who was in some sense predecessor to Jonson himself in all this, affected Herbert more intimately. Sir Philip Sidney. In his love poems there is the more lavish and studied eloquence of the Elizabethan manner. But the way natural, personal relationships, sensitive earnestness and direct self-giving blend with conventional forms and rhetorical devices, makes a significant preparation for Herbert's poetry. There is the disconcerting fusion of logical subtlety and dexterity with honesty and tenderness, in the best of Sidney, that we may wrongly think of as peculiarly Herbert's. And if Sidney's secular sonnets to Stella indicate this much, his divine poems—notably the metrical versions of the first forty psalms—come even nearer to those we are to study.

The love poems and psalms of Sidney, the poems of Southwell, the lyrics of Ben Jonson, the verse of the Elizabethan stage—these need all to be set alongside Donne's achievement, in a picture of Herbert's inheritance. Two other aspects of that inheritance deserve a short reference. First, the widespread and ingenious Elizabethan cultivation of the arts of song and of verse for music persisted into Herbert's age. He was a musician himself, and composed much for singing (the poems in this selection start there), both in verses for music, and in his poetry at large, the concern for metrical variety, for decisive progression from stanza to stanza, for the stable underlying form habitual in com-

position for song, may be detected. Second, and the more so because we may find something unsympathetic or uncongenial here, we need to recall the prevalence in Herbert's time of ways of thought, reflection, and devotion, based upon emblems and symbols and figures and types. The appeal of allegory was still very much alive, the instinctive perception of analogies and comparisons, and the conviction that these meanings really were *there* to be perceived, were there by divine purpose. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, we should remind ourselves, achieved its fame during Herbert's boyhood. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* achieved its fame some thirty years after his death. Into this habit of mind and imagination, flexible and quick to grasp similitudes and the 'point' of a comparison, to grasp the *representative* character of a plight or situation, or the 'picture' behind formal references, we have now to try to enter.

I

Hymns and Anthems

'His chiefest recreation was Musick, in which heavenly Art he was a most excellent Master, and did himself compose many divine Hymns and Anthems, which he set and sung to his Lute or Viol .

Walton's 'Life'

Praise (II)

King of Glorie, King of Peace,
I will love thee
And that love may never cease,
I will move thee.

Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spar'd me

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee

Though my sinnes against me cried,
Thou didst cleare me,
And alone, when they replied,
Thou didst heare me.

Sev'n whole dayes, not one in seven,
I will praise thee
In my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee

Thou grew'st soft and moist with tears,
Thou relentedst
And when Justice call'd for fears
Thou dissentedst

Small it is, in this poore sort
To enroll thee
Ev'n eternitie is too short
To extoll thee.

Antiphon (I)

Cho Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King

Vers. The heav'ns are not too high,
His praise may thither flie
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King

Vers The church with psalms must shout,
No doore can keep them out
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

Vertue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie
The dew shall weep thy fall to night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die

Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die

Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives,
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

The Elixir

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee

Not rudely, as a beast,
To runne into an action,
But still to make thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection

A man that looks on glasse
On it may stay his eye,
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie

All may of thee partake
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th'action fine

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for lesse be told

The 23d Psalme

The God of love my shepherd is,
And he that doth me feed
While he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want or need?

He leads me to the tender grasse,
Where I both feed and rest;
Then to the streams that gently passe
In both I have the best

Or if I stray, he doth convert
And bring my mind in frame
And all this not for my desert,
But for his holy name

Yea, in deaths shadie black abode
Well may I walk, not fear
For thou art with me, and thy rod
To guide, thy staffe to bear

Nay, thou dost make me sit and dine,
Ev'n in my enemies sight
My head with oyl, my cup with wine
Runnes over day and night

Surely thy sweet and wondrous love
Shall measure all my dayes,
And as it never shall remove,
So neither shall my praise.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Psalm XXIII

The Lord, the Lord my Shepheard is,
And so can never I
Tast misery
He rests me in greene pasture his
By waters still and sweete
He guides my feete

Hee me revives, leades me the way,
Which righteousness doth take,
For his name sake
Yea, though I should through valleys stray
Of deathes dark shade, I will
Noe whitt feare ill

For thou, deare Lord, thou me besett'st,
Thy rodd and thy staff be
To comfort me
Before me thou a table sett'st,
Even when foes envious eye
Doth it espy

Thou oil'st my head, thou fill'st my cupp,
Nay, more, thou endlesse good,
Shalt give me food
To thee, I say, ascended up,
Where thou, the Lord of all,
Dost hold thy hall

ROBERT SOUTHWELL

New Prince, New Pompe

Behold a silly tender Babe
In freezing Winter night,
In homely Manger trembling lyes;
Alas a pitious sight

The Innes are full, no man will yield
This little Pilgrime bed,
But forc't he is with silly beasts,
In Crib to shrowd his head

Despise him not for lying there
First what he is enquire
An orient pearle is often found
In depth of dirtie mire

Waigh not his Crib, his woodden dish
Nor beasts that by him feed
Waigh not his Mother's poore attire,
Nor *Iosephs* simple weed.

This Stable is a Princes Court,
The Crib his chaire of State
The Beasts are parcell of his Pompe,
The woodden dish his plate

The persons, in that poore attire,
His royall liveries weare,
The Prince himselfe is com'n from heaven,
This pompe is prized there.

With ioy approach, O Christian wight,
Doe homage to thy King,
And highly prayse his humble Pompe,
Which He from Heaven doth bring.

HENRY VAUGHAN

Peace

My Soul, there is a Countrie
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged Centrie
All skilfull in the wars,
There above noise, and danger
Sweet peace sits crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a Manger
Commands the Beauteous files,
He is thy gracious friend,
And (O my Soul awake!)
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake,
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flowre of peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortresse, and thy ease,
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But one, who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy Cure

II

His Quick-piercing Mind

dipping and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts before they come into our mouths, truly affecting and cordially expressing all that we say, so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is heart-deep . . . ’

Herbert's 'Country Parson'

Deniall

When my devotions could not pierce
Thy silent eases,
Then was my heart broken, as was my verse
My breast was full of fears
And disorder

My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow,
Did flie asunder
Each took his way, some would to pleasures go,
Some to the warres and thunder
Of alarms

As good go any where, they say,
As to benumme
Both knees and heart, in crying night and day,
Come, come, my God, O come,
But no hearing

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue
To crie to thee,
And then not heare it crying! all day long
My heart was in my knee,
But no hearing

Therefore my soul lay out of sight,
Untun'd, unstrung
My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
Like a nipt blossome, hung
Discontented

O cheer and tune my heartlesse breast,
Deferre no time;
That so thy favours granting my request
They and my minde may chime,
And mend my ryme.

Jordan (I)

Who sayes that fictions onely and false hair
Become a verse? Is there in truth no beautie?
Is all good structure in a winding stair?
May no lines passe, except they do their dutie
Not to a true, but painted chair?

Is it no verse, except enchanted groves
And sudden arbours shadow course-spunne lines?
Must purling streams refresh a lovers loves?
Must all be vail'd, while he that reades, divines,
Catching the sense at two removes?

Shepherds are honest people, let them sing
Riddle who list, for me, and pull for Prime
I envie no mans nightingale or spring,
Nor let them punish me with loss of rime,
Who plainly say, *My God, My King.*

The Quip

The merrie world did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together, where I lay,
And all in sport to geere at me

First, Beautie crept into a rose,
Which when I pluckt not, Sir, said she,
Tell me, I pray, Whose hands are those?
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me

Then Money came, and chinking still,
What tune is this, poore man? said he
I heard in Musick you had skill
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me

Then came brave Glorie puffing by
In silks that whistled, who but he?
He scarce allow'd me half an eie
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
And he would needs a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an Oration
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Yet when the houre of thy designe
To answer these fine things shall come,
Speak not at large, say, I am thine
And then they have their answer home

Dialogue

Sweetest Saviour, if my soul
Were but worth the having,
Quickly should I then controll
Any thought of waving
But when all my care and pains
Cannot give the name of gains
To thy wretch so full of stains,
What delight or hope remains?

*What, Child, is the ballance thine,
Thine the poise and measure?
If I say, Thou shalt be mine,
Finger not my treasure
What the gains in having thee
Do amount to, onely he,
Who for man was sold, can see,
That transferr'd th' accounts to me*

But as I can see no merit,
Leading to this favour
So the way to fit me for it
Is beyond my savour
As the reason then is thine,
So the way is none of mine
I disclaim the whole designe
Sinne disclaims and I resigne

*That is all, if that I could
Get without repining,
And my clay, my creature, would
Follow my resigning.
That as I did freely part
With my glorie and desert,
Left all joyes to feel all smart—
Ah! no more thou break'st my heart.*

Giddinesse

Oh, what a thing is man! how farre from power,
From settled peace and rest!
He is some twentie sev'rall men at least
Each sev'rall houle

One while he counts of heav'n, as of his treasure
But then a thought creeps in,
And calls him coward, who for fear of sinne
Will lose a pleasure.

Now he will fight it out, and to the warres,
Now eat his bread in peace,
And snudge in quiet now he scorns increase,
Now all day spares

He builds a house, which quickly down must go,
As if a whirlwinde blew
And crusht the building and it's partly true,
His minde is so

O what a sight were Man, if his attires
Did alter with his minde,
And like a Dolphins skinne, his clothes combin'd
With his desires!

Surely if each one saw anothers heart,
There would be no commerce,
No sale or bargain passe all would disperse,
And live apart

Lord, mend or rather make us one creation
Will not suffice our turn
Except thou make us dayly, we shall spurn
Our own salvation

Redemption

Having been tenant long to a rich Lord
Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,
And make a suit unto him, to afford
A new small-rented lease, and cancell th'old
In heaven at his manour I him sought
They told me there, that he was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly bought
Long since on earth, to take possession
I straight return'd, and knowing his great birth,
Sought him accordingly in great resorts,
In cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth
Of theeves and murderers there I him espied,
Who straight, *Your suit is granted*, said, & died

Hope

I gave to Hope a watch of mine but he
An anchor gave to me
Then an old prayer-book I did present
And he an optick sent
With that I gave a viall full of tears
But he a few green eares
Ah Loyterer! I'le no more, no more I'le bring
I did expect a ring

Sinnes Round

Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am,
That my offences course it in a ring
My thoughts are working like a busie flame,
Untill their cockatrice they hatch and bring
And when they once have perfected their draughts,
My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts

My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts,
Which spit it forth like the Sicilian Hill
They vent the wares, and passe them with their faults,
And by their breathing ventilate the ill
But words suffice not, where are lewd intentions
My hands do joyn to finish the inventions

My hands do joyn to finish the inventions
And so my sinnes ascend three stories high,
As Babel grew, before there were dissensions
Yet ill deeds loyter not for they supplie
New thoughts of sinning wherefore, to my shame,
Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am

Jordan (II)

When first my lines of heavn'ly joyes made mention,
Such was their lustre, they did so excell,
That I sought out quaint words, and trim invention,
My thoughts began to burnish, sprout, and swell,
Curling with metaphors a plain intention,
Decking the sense, as if it were to sell

Thousands of notions in my brain did runne,
Off'ring their service, if I were not sped
I often blotted what I had begunne,
This was not quick enough, and that was dead
Nothing could seem too rich to clothe the sunne,
Much lesse those joyes which trample on his head

As flames do work and winde, when they ascend,
So did I weave my self into the sense
But while I bustled, I might heare a friend
Whisper, *How wide is all this long pretence!*
There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd
Copie out onely that, and save expense

Love (III)

Love bade me welcome yet my soul drew back,
Guiltie of dust and sinne
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack'd any thing

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
I cannot look on thee
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them let my shame
Go where it doth deserve
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
My deare, then I will serve
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat
So I did sit and eat.

THOMAS CAREW

Lines for Maria Wentworth

And here the precious dust is layd,
Whose purely temper'd Clay was made
So fine, that it the guest betray'd

Else the soule grew so fast within,
It broke the outward shell of sinne,
And so was hatch'd a Cherubin

In heighth, it soar'd to God above,
In depth, it did to knowledge move,
And spread in breadth to generall love

Before, a pious duty shind
To Parents, courtesie behind,
On either side an equall mind,

Good to the Poore, to kindred deare,
To servants kind, to friendship cleare,
To nothing but her selfe, severe

So though a Virgin, yet a Bride
To every Grace, she justifi'd
A chaste Poligamie, and dy'd

Learn from hence (Reader) what small trust
We owe this world, where vertue must
Fraile as our flesh, crumble to dust

JOHN DONNE

Holy Sonnet X

Batter my heart, three person'd God, for, you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend,
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee,'and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new
I, like an usurt towne, to'another due,
Labour to'admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue,
Yet dearly'I love you, and would be lov'd faine,
But am betroth'd unto your enemye,
Divorce mee,'untie, or breake that knot againe,
Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you'enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee

HENRY VAUGHAN

The Morning-Watch

O Joyes! Infinite sweetnes! with what flowres,
And shoots of glory, my soul breakes, and buds!

All the long houres
Of night, and Rest
Through the still shrouds
Of sleep, and Clouds,

This Dew fell on my Breast,

O how it *Blouds*,

And *Spirits* all my Earth! heark! In what Rings,

And *Hymning Circulations* the quick world

Awakes, and sings,

The rising winds,

And falling springs,

Birds, beasts, all things

Adore him in their kinds.

Thus all is hurl'd

In sacred *Hymnes*, and *Order*, the great *Chime*

And *Symphony* of nature Prayer is

The world in tune,

A spirit-voyce,

And vocall joyes

Whose *Eccho* is heav'ns blisse.

O let me climbe

When I lye down! The Pious soul by night

Is like a clouded starre, whose beames though sed

To shed their light
Under some Cloud
Yet are above,
And shine, and move
Beyond that mustie shrowd
So in my Bed
That Curtain'd grave, though sleep, like ashes, hide
My lamp, and life, both shall in thee abide

III

The Many Spiritual Conflicts

‘ . . Sir, I pray deliver this little Book
to my dear brother Farrer, and tell him,
he shall find in it a picture of the many
spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt
God and my Soul, before I could subject
mine to the will of Jesus my Master. . ’

Walton's 'Life'

The Collar

I struck the board, and cry'd, No more
 I will abroad
 What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free, free as the roe,
 Loose as the winde, as large as store.
 Shall I be still in suit?
 Have I no harvest but a thorn
 To let me bloud, and not restore
 What I have lost with cordiall fruit?
 Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did drie it there was corn
 Before my tears did drown it
Is the yeare onely lost to me?
 Have I no bayes to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted?
 All wasted?
Not so, my heart but there is fruit,
 And thou hast hands
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit, and not Forsake thy cage,
 Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
 Good cable, to enforce and draw,
 And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see
 Away, take heed
 I will abroad

Call in thy deaths head there tie up thy fears
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need,
Deserves his load
But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Child'*
And I reply'd, *My Lord*

The Crosse

What is this strange and uncouth thing?
To make me sigh, and seek, and faint, and die,
Untill I had some place, where I might sing,
And serve thee, and not onely I,
But all my wealth and familie might combine
To set thy honour up, as our designe.

And then when after much delay,
Much wrastling, many a combate, this deare end,
So much desir'd, is giv'n, to take away
My power to serve thee, to unbend
All my abilities, my designes confound,
And lay my threatnings bleeding on the ground

One ague dwelleth in my bones,
Another in my soul (the memorie
What I would do for thee, if once my grones
Could be allow'd for harmonie)
I am in all a weak disabled thing,
Save in the sight thereof, where strength doth sting

Besides, things sort not to my will,
Ev'n when my will doth studie thy renown
Thou turnest th'edge of all things on me still,
Taking me up to throw me down.
So that, ev'n when my hopes seem to be sped,
I am to grief alive, to them as dead

To have my aim, and yet to be
Further from it then when I bent my bow,
To make my hopes my torture, and the fee
Of all my woes another wo,
Is in the midst of delicates to need,
And ev'n in Paradise to be a weed

Ah my deare Father, ease my smart!
These contrarieties crush me these crosse actions
Doe winde a rope about, and cut my heart
And yet since these thy contradictions
Are properly a crosse felt by thy Sonne,
With but foure words, my words, *Thy will be done*

Confession

O what a cunning guest
Is this same grief¹ within my heart I made
Closets, and in them many a chest,
And, like a master in my trade,
In those chests, boxes, in each box, a till
Yet grief knows all, and enters when he will

No scrue, no piercer can
Into a piece of timber work and winde,
As God's afflictions into man,
When he a torture hath design'd
They are too subtill for the subt'llest hearts,
And fall, like rheumes, upon the tendrest parts

We are the earth, and they,
Like moles within us, heave, and cast about
And till they foot and clutch their prey,
They never cool, much lesse give out
No smith can make such locks but they have keyes
Closets are halls to them, and hearts, high-wayes

Onely an open breast
Doth shut them out, so that they cannot enter,
Or, if they enter, cannot rest,
But quickly seek some new adventure.
Smooth open hearts no fastning have, but fiction
Doth give a hold and handle to affliction.

Wherefore my faults and sinnes,
Lord, I acknowledge, take thy plagues away
For since confession pardon winnes,
I challenge here the brightest day,
The clearest diamond let them do their best,
They shall be thick and cloudie to my breast.

Conscience

Peace pratler, do not lowie
Not a fair look, but thou dost call it foul
Not a sweet dish, but thou dost call it sowre
Musick to thee doth howl
By listing to thy chatting fears
I have lost both mine eyes and cares

Pratler, no more, I say
My thoughts must work, but like a noiseslesse sphere,
Harmonious peace must rock them all the day
No room for pratlers there
If thou persistest, I will tell thee,
That I have physick to expell thee

And the receipt shall be
My Saviours blood: when ever at his board
I do but taste it, straight it cleanseth me,
And leaves thee not a word,
No, not a tooth or nail to scratch,
And at my actions carp, or catch

Yet if thou talkest still,
Besides my physick, know there's some for thee
Some wood and nails to make a staffe or bill
For those that trouble me
The bloudie crosse of my deare Lord
Is both my physick and my sword

Affliction (I)

When first thou didst entice to thee my heart,
I thought the service brave
So many joyes I writ down for my part,
Besides what I might have
Out of my stock of naturall delights,
Augmented with thy gracious benefits

I looked on thy furniture so fine,
And made it fine to me
Thy glorious household-stuffe did me entwine,
And 'tice me unto thee
Such starres I counted mine both heav'n and earth
Payd me my wages in a world of mirth

What pleasures could I want, whose King I served,
Where joyes my fellows were?
Thus argu'd into hopes, my thoughts reserved
No place for grief or fear
Therefore my sudden soul caught at the place,
And made her youth and fierceness seek thy face.

At first thou gav'st me milk and sweetnesses,
I had my wish and way
My dayes were straw'd with flow'rs and happinesse,
There was no moneth but May
But with my yeares sorrow did twist and grow,
And made a partie unawares for wo

My flesh began unto my soul in pain,
Sicknesses cleave my bones,
Consuming agues dwell in ev'ry vein,
And tune my breath to grones
Sorrow was all my soul, I scarce beleaved,
Till grief did tell me roundly, that I lived

When I got health, thou took'st away my life,
And more, for my friends die
My mirth and edge was lost, a blunted knife
Was of more use then I
Thus thinne and lean without a fence or friend,
I was blown through with ev'ry storm and winde

Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
The way that takes the town,
Thou didst betray me to a lingring book,
And wrap me in a gown
I was entangled in the world of strife,
Before I had the power to change my life

Yet, for I threatned oft the siege to raise,
Not simpring all mine age,
Thou often didst with Academick praise
Melt and dissolve my rage
I took thy sweetned pill, till I came where
I could not go away, nor persevere

Yet lest perchance I should too happie be
In my unhappinesse,
Turning my purge to food, thou throwest me
Into more sicknesses
Thus doth thy power crosse-bias me, not making
Thine own gift good, yet me from my wayes taking.

Now I am here, what thou wilt do with me
None of my books will show
I reade, and sigh, and wish I were a tree,
For sure then I should grow
To fruit or shade at least some bird would trust
Her household to me, and I should be just

Yet, though thou troublest me, I must be meek,
In weakness must be stout
Well, I will change the service, and go seek
Some other master out
Ah my deare God! though I am clean forgot,
Let me not love thee, if I love thee not

Affliction (IV)

Broken in pieces all asunder
Lord, hunt me not,
A thing forgot,
Once a poore creature, now a wonder,
A wonder tortur'd in the space
Betwixt this world and that of grace

My thoughts are all a case of knives,
Wounding my heart
With scatter'd smart,
As watering pots give flowers their lives
Nothing their furie can controll
While they do wound and pink my soul

All my attendants are at strife,
Quitting their place
Unto my face
Nothing performs the task of life
The elements are let loose to fight,
And while I live, trie out their right

Oh help, my God! let not their plot
Kill them and me,
And also thee,
Who are my life dissolve the knot,
As the sunne scatters by his light
All the rebellions of the night

Then shall those powers, which work for grief,
 Enter thy pay,
 And day by day
Labour thy praise, and my relief,
 With care and courage building me,
 Till I reach heav'n, and much more, thee.

The Pearl

I know the wayes of Learning, both the head
And pipes that feed the presse, and make it runne,
What reason hath from nature borrowed,
Or of it self, like a good huswife, spunne
In laws and policie, what the starres conspire,
What willing nature speaks, what forc'd by fire,
Both th'old discoveries, and the new-found seas,
The stock and surplus, cause and historie
All these stand open, or I have the keyes
Yet I love thee

I know the wayes of Honour, what maintains
The quicke returns of courtesie and wit
In vies of favours whether partie gains,
When glorie swells the heart, and moldeth it
To all expressions both of hand and eye,
Which on the world a true-love-knot may tie,
And bear the bundle, wheresoe're it goes
How many drammes of spirit there must be
To sell my life unto my friends or foes
Yet I love thee

I know the wayes of Pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishes of it,
The propositions of hot bloud and brains,
What mirth and musick mean, what love and wit
Have done these twentie hundred yeares, and more
I know the projects of unbridled store
My stuffe is flesh, not brasse, my senses live,
And grumble oft, that they have more in me
Than he that curbs them, being but one to five
Yet I love thee

I know all these, and have them in my hand
Therefore not sealed, but with open eyes
I flie to thee, and fully understand
Both the main sale, and the commodities,
And at what rate and price I have thy love,
With all the circumstances that may move
Yet through these labyrinths, not my groveling wit,
But thy silk twist let down from heav'n to me,
Did both conduct and teach me, how by it
To climbe to thee

The Flower

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns! ev'n as the flowers in spring,
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring
Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing

Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
Could have recover'd greenesse? It was gone
Quite under ground, as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown,
Where they together
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown

These are thy wonders, Lord of power,
Killing and quickning, bringing down to hell
And up to heaven in an houre,
Making a chiming of a passing-bell
We say amisse,
This or that is
Thy word is all, if we could spell

O that I once past changing were,
Fast in thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!
Many a spring I shoot up fair,
Off'ring at heav'n, growing and groning thither
Nor doth my flower
Want a spring-showre,
My sinnes and I joining together

But while I grow in a straight line,
Still upwards bent, as if heav'n were mine own,
Thy anger comes, and I decline·
What frost to that? what pole is not the zone,
Where all things burn,
When thou dost turn,
And the least frown of thine is shown?

And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write,
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing O my onely light,
It cannot be
That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night

These are thy wonders, Lord of love,
To make us see we are but flowers that glide
Which when we once can finde and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us, where to bide
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride

The Pilgrimage

I travell'd on, seeing the hill, where lay
 My expectation
 A long it was and weary way
 The gloomy cave of Desperation
I left on th'one, and on the other side
 The rock of Pride

And so I came to Fancies meadow strow'd
 With many a flower
 Fain would I here have made abode,
 But I was quicken'd by my houre
So to Cares cops I came, and there got through
 With much ado

That led me to the wilde of Passion, which
 Some call the wold,
 A wasted place, but sometimes rich.
 Here I was robb'd of all my gold,
Save one good Angell, which a friend had ti'd
 Close to my side.

At length I got unto the gladsome hill,
 Where lay my hope,
 Where lay my heart, and climbing still,
 When I had gain'd the brow and top,
A lake of brackish waters on the ground
 Was all I found

With that abash'd and struck with many a sting
Of swarming fears,
I fell, and cry'd, Alas my King!
Can both the way and end be tears?
Yet taking heart I rose, and then perceiv'd
I was deceiv'd

My hill was further so I flung away,
Yet heard a crie
Just as I went, *None goes that way*
And lives If that be all, said I,
After so foul a journey death is fair,
And but a chair

JOHN DONNE

A Hymne to God the Father

Wilt thou forgive that sinne where I begunne,
Which is my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive those sinnes through which I runne,
And doe them still though still I doe deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For, I have more

Wilt thou forgive that sinne by which I wonne
Others to sinne[?] and, made my sinne their doore?
Wilt thou forgive that sinne which I did shunne
A yeare, or two but wallowed in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For, I have more

I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore,
Swear by thy selfe, that at my death thy Sunne
Shall shine as it shines now, and heretofore,
And, having done that, Thou hast done,
I have no more,

ANDREW MARVELL

A Dialogue between the Soul and Body

Soul O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise
A Soul enslav'd so many wayes?
With bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands
In Feet, and manacled in Hands
Here blinded with an Eye, and there
Deaf with the drumming of an Ear
A Soul hung up, as 'twere, in Chains
Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins
Tortur'd, besides each other part,
In a vain Head, and double Heart

Body Oh who shall me deliver whole,
From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?
Which, stretcht upright, impales me so,
That mine own Precipice I go,
And warms and moves this needless Frame
(A Fever could but do the same)
And, wanting where its spight to try,
Has made me live to let me dye
A Body that could never rest,
Since this ill Spirit it possest

Soul What Magick could me thus confine
Within anothers Grief to pine?
Where whatsoever it complain,
I feel, that cannot feel, the pain

And all my Care its self employes,
That to preserve, which me destroys
Constrain'd not only to indure
Diseases, but, whats worse, the Cure
And ready oft the Port to gain,
Am Shipwrackt into Health again

Body But Physick yet could never reach
The Maladies Thou me dost teach,
Whom first the Cramp of Hope does Tear
And then the Palsie Shakes of Fear
The Pestilence of Love does heat
Or Hatred's hidden Ulcer eat
Joy's chearful Madness does perplex
Or Sorrow's other Madness vex
Which Knowledge forces me to know,
And Memory will not foregoe.
What but a Soul could have the wit
To build me up for Sin so fit?
So Architects do square and hew
Green Trees that in the Forest grew

IV

Poetry of Meditation

Meditation which we treat of, is
nothing els but a diligent and forcible
application of the understanding, to
seeke, and knowe, and as it were to tast
some divine matter '

Bruno's 'Meditations'

Aaron

Holinesse on the head,
Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
To leade them unto life and rest
Thus are true Aarons drest

Profaneness in my head
Defects and darknesse in my breast,
A noise of passions ringing me for dead
Unto a place where is no rest
Poore priest thus am I drest

Onely another head
I have, another heart and breast,
Another musick, making live not dead,
Without whom I could have no rest
In him I am well drest

Christ is my onely head,
My alone onely heart and breast,
My onely musick, striking me ev'n dead,
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in him new drest

So holy in my head,
Perfect and light in my deare breast,
My doctrine tun'd by Christ (who is not dead
But lives in me while I do rest)
Come people, Aaron's drest

The Pulley

When God at first made man,
Having a glasse of blessings standing by,
Let us (said he) poure on him all we can
Let the worlds riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span

So strength first made a way,
Then beautie flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure
Rest in the bottome lay

For if I should (said he)
Bestow this jewell also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts in stead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature
So both should losers be

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlesnesse
Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
May tesse him to my breast

Prayer (II)

Of what an easie quick accesse
My blessed Lord, art thou! how suddenly
 May our requests thine eare invade!
To shew that state dislikes not easnesse,
If I but lift mine eyes, my suit is made
Thou canst no more not heare, then thou canst die.

Of what supreme almightie power
Is thy great arm, which spans the east and west,
 And tacks the centre to the sphere!
By it do all things live their measur'd houre.
We cannot ask the thing, which is not there,
Blaming the shallownesse of our request.

Of what unmeasurable love
Art thou possesse, who, when thou couldst not die,
 Wert faine to take our flesh and curse,
And for our sakes in person sinne reprove,
That by destroying that which ty'd thy purse,
Thou mightst make way for liberalitie!

Since then these three wait on thy throne,
Ease, Power, and Love, I value prayer so,
 That were I to leave all but one,
Wealth, fame, endowments, vertues, all should go;
I and deare prayer would together dwell,
And quickly gain, for each inch lost, an ell.

The Agonie

Philosophers have measur'd mountains,
Fathom'd the depths of seas, of states, and kings,
Walk'd with a staffe to heav'n, and traced fountains

But there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it doth more behove
Yet few there are that sound them, Sinne and Love

Who would know Sinne, let him repair
Unto Mount Olivet, there shall he see
A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair,
His skinne, his garments bloudie be
Sinne is that presse and vice, which forceth pain
To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein.

Who knows not Love, let him assay
And taste that juice, which on the crosse a pike
Did set again abroach, then let him say
If ever he did taste the like
Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,
Which my God feels as bloud, but I, as wine

The Sacrifice

Oh all ye, who passe by, whose eyes and munde
To wordly things are sharp, but to me blinde,
To me, who took eyes that I might you finde
Was ever grief like mine?

The Princes of my people make a head
Against their Maker they do wish me dead,
Who cannot wish, except I give them bread
Was ever grief like mine?

Without me each one, who doth now me brave,
Had to this day been an Egyptian slave.
They use that power against me, which I gave
Was ever grief like mine?

Mine own Apostle, who the bag did beare,
Though he had all I had, did not forbear
To sell me also, and to put me there
Was ever grief like mine?

For thirtie pence he did my death devise,
Who at three hundred did the ointment prize,
Not half so sweet as my sweet sacrifice
Was ever grief like mine?

Therefore my soul melts, and my hearts deare treasure
Drops bloud (the onely beads) my words to measure
O let this cup passe, if it be thy pleasure
Was ever grief like mine?

These drops being temper'd with a sinners tears
A Balsome are for both the Hemispheres
Curing all wounds, but mine, all, but my fears
Was ever grief like mine?

Yet my Disciples sleep I cannot gain
One houre of watching, but their drowsie brain
Comforts not me, and doth my doctrine stain
Was ever grief like mine?

Arise, arise, they come Look how they runne!
Alas! what haste they make to be undone!
How with their lanterns do they seek the sunne!
Was ever grief like mine?

With clubs and staves they seek me, as a thief,
Who am the Way and Truth, the true relief,
Most true to those, who are my greatest grief
Was ever grief like mine?

Judas, dost thou betray me with a kisse?
Canst thou finde hell about my lips? and misse
Of life, just at the gates of life and blisse?
Was ever grief like mine?

See, they lay hold on me, not with the hands
Of faith, but furie yet at their commands
I suffer binding, who have loos'd their bands
Was ever grief like mine?

All my Disciples flie, fear puts a barre
Betwixt my friends and me They leave the starre,
That brought the wise men of the East from farre
Was ever grief like mine?

Then from one ruler to another bound
They leade me, urging, that it was not sound
What I taught Comments would the text confound
 Was ever grief like mine?

The Priest and rulers all false witsesse seek
'Ganst him, who seeks not life, but is the meek
And readie Paschal Lambe of this great week
 Was ever grief like mine?

Then they accuse me of great blasphemie,
That I did thrust into the Dettie,
Who never thought that any robbery
 Was ever grief like mine?

Some said, that I the Temple to the floore
In three dayes raz'd, and raised as before
Why, he that built the world can do much more.
 Was ever grief like mine?

Then they condemne me all with that same breath,
Which I do give them daily, unto death
Thus *Adam* my first breathing rendereth
 Was ever grief like mine?

They binde, and leade me unto *Herod* he
Sends me to *Pilate* This makes them agree,
But yet their friendship is my enmitie:
 Was ever grief like mine?

Herod and all his bands do set me light,
Who teach all hands to warre, fingers to fight,
And onely am the Lord of Hosts and might
 Was ever grief like mine?

Herod in judgement sits, while I do stand,
Examines me with a censorious hand
I him obey, who all things else command
Was ever grief like mine?

The *Jews* accuse me with despightfulnesse,
And vying malice with my gentlenesse,
Pick quarrels with their onely happinesse
Was ever grief like mine?

I answer nothing, but with patience prove
If stonie hearts will melt with gentle love
But who does hawk at eagles with a dove?
Was ever grief like mine?

My silence rather doth augment their crie,
My dove doth back into my bosome flie,
Because the raging waters still are high
Was ever grief like mine?

Heark how they crie aloud still, *Crucifie*
It is not fit he live a day, they crie,
Who cannot live lesse than eternally
Was ever grief like mine?

Pilate, a stranger, holdeth off, but they,
Mine owne deare people, cry, *Away, away*,
With noises confused frightening the day
Was ever grief like mine?

Yet still they shout, and crie, and stop their eares,
Putting my life among their sinnes and feares,
And therefore wish *my bloud on them and theirs*
Was ever grief like mine?

See how spite cankers things These words aright
Used, and wished, are the whole worlds light
But hony is their gall, brightnesse their night
Was ever grief like mine?

They choose a murderer, and all agree
In him to do themselves a courtesie
For it was their own case who killed me
Was ever grief like mine?

And a seditious murderer he was
But I the Prince of peace, peace that doth passe
All understanding, more than heav'n doth glasse.
Was ever grief like mine?

Why, Caesar is their onely King, not I-
He clave the stonie rock, when they were drie,
But surely not their hearts, as I well trie
Was ever grief like mine?

Ah! how they scourge me! yet my tendernesse
Doubles each lash and yet their bitternesse
Windes up my grief to a mysteriousnesse
Was ever grief like mine?

They buffet him, and box him as they list,
Who grasps the earth and heaven with his fist,
And never yet, whom he would punish, miss'd
Was ever grief like mine?

Behold, they spit on me in scornfull wise,
Who by my spittle gave the blinde man eies,
Leaving his blindnesse to my enemies
Was ever grief like mine?

My face they cover, though it be divine
As *Moses* face was vailed, so is mine,
Lest on their double-dark souls either shine
Was ever grief like mine?

Servants and abjects flout me, they are wittie
Now *prophesie who strikes thee*, is their dittie
So they in me denie themselves all pitie.
Was ever grief like mine?

And now am I deliver'd unto death,
Which each one calls for so with utmost breath,
That he before me well nigh suffereth
Was ever grief like mine?

Weep not, deare friends, since I for both have wept
When all my tears were bloud, the while you slept
Your tears for your own fortunes should be kept
Was ever grief like mine?

The souldiers lead me to the Common Hall,
There they deride me, they abuse me all
Yet for twelve heav'nly legions I could call
Was ever grief like mine?

Then with a scarlet robe they me array,
Which shews my bloud to be the onely way
And cordiall left to repair mans decay
Was ever grief like mine?

Then on my head a crown of thorns I wear
For these are all the grapes *Sion* doth bear,
Though I my vine planted and watred there
Was ever grief like mine?

So sits the earths great curse in *Adams* fall
Upon my head so I remove it all
From th'earth unto my brows, and bear the thrall
Was ever grief like mine?

Then with the reed they gave to me before,
They strike my head, the rock from whence all store
Of heav'nly blessings issue evermore
Was ever grief like mine?

They bow their knees to me, and cry, *Hail King*
What ever scoffes & scornfulnesse can bring,
I am the floore, the sink, where they it fling
Was ever grief like mine?

Yet since mans scepters are as frail as reeds,
And thorny all their crowns, bloudie their weeds;
I, who am Truth, turn into truth their deeds
Was ever grief like mine?

The souldiers also spit upon that face,
Which Angels did desire to have the grace,
And Prophets, once to see, but found no place
Was ever grief like mine?

Thus trimmed, forth they bring me to the rout,
Who *Crucifie him*, crie with one strong shout
God holds his peace at man, and man cries out
Was ever grief like mine?

They leade me in once moie, and putting then
Mine own clothes on, they leade me out agen
Whom devils flie, thus is he toss'd of men
Was ever grief like mine?

And now wearie of sport, glad to ingrosse
All spite in one, counting my life their losse,
They carrie me to my most bitter crosse
Was ever grief like mine?

My crosse I bear my self, untill I faint
Then Simon bears it for me by constraint,
The decreed burden of each mortall Saint
Was ever grief like mine?

O all ye who passe by, behold and see,
Man stole the fruit, but I must climbe the tree,
The tree of life to all, but onely me
Was ever grief like mine?

Lo, here I hang, charg'd with a world of sinne,
The greater world o'th'two, for that came in
By words, but this by sorrow I must win
Was ever grief like mine?

Such sorrow as, if sinfull man could feel,
Or feel his part, he would not cease to kneel,
Till all were melted, though he were all steel
Was ever grief like mine?

But, *O my God, my God!* why leav'st thou me,
The sonne, in whom thou dost delight to be?
My God, my God——
Never was grief like mine

Shame tears my soul, my bodie many a wound,
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper that confound,
Reproches, which are free, while I am bound
Was ever grief like mine?

Now heal thy self, Physician, now come down
Alas! I did so, when I left my crown
And fathers smile for you, to feel his frown
Was ever grief like mine?

In healing not my self, there doth consist
All that salvation, which ye now resist,
Your safetie in my sicknesse doth subsist
Was ever grief like mine?

Betwixt two theeves I spend my utmost breath,
As he that for some robberie suffereth
Alas! what have I stollen from you? Death
Was ever grief like mine?

A king my title is, prefixt on high,
Yet by my subjects am condemn'd to die
A servile death in servile companie
Was ever grief like mine?

They give me vinegar mingled with gall,
But more with malice yet, when they did call,
With Manna, Angels food, I fed them all
Was ever grief like mine?

They part my garments, and by lot dispose
My coat, the type of love, which once cur'd those
Who sought for help, never malicious foes
Was ever grief like mine?

Nay, after death their spite shall further go,
For they will pierce my side, I full well know,
That as sinne came, so Sacraments might flow
Was ever grief like mine?

But now I die, now all is finished
My wo, mans weal and now I bow my head
Only let others say, when I am dead,
 Never was grief like mine

HENRY KING

The Exequy

To his Matchlesse never to be forgotten Freind

Accept thou Shrine of my dead Saint,
Instead of Dirges this complaint,
And for sweet flowres to crown thy hearse,
Receive a strew of weeping verse
From thy griev'd friend, whom thou might'st see
Quite melted into tears for thee

Dear loss! since thy untimely fate
My task hath been to meditate
On thee, on thee thou art the book,
The library whereon I look
Though almost blind For thee (lov'd clay)
I languish out, not live the day,
Using no other exercise
But what I practise with mine eyes
By which wet glasses I find out
How lazily time creeps about
To one that mourns this, onely this
My exercise and bus'ness is
So I compute the weary houres
With sighs dissolved into showres

Nor wonder if my time go thus
Backward and most preposterous,
Thou hast benighted me, thy set

This Eve of blackness did beget,
Who was't my day (though overcast)
Before thou had'st thy Noon-tide past
And I remember must in tears,
Thou scarce had'st seen so many years
As Day tells houres By thy cleer Sun
My life and fortunes first did run,
But thou wilt never more appear
Folded within my Hemisphere
Since both thy light and motion
Like a fled Star is fall'n and gon,
And twixt me and my soules dear wish
The earth now interposed is,
Which such a strange eclipse doth make
As ne'ie was read in Almanake.
I could allow thee for a time
To darken me and my sad Clime,
Were it a month, a year, or ten,
I would thy exile live till then,
And all that space my murther adjourn,
So thou wouldst promise to return,
And putting off thy ashy shrowd
At length disperse this sorrows cloud

But woe is me! the longest date
Too narrow is to calculate
These empty hopes never shall I
Be so much blest as to descry
A glimpse of thee, till that day come
Which shall the earth to cinders doome,
And a fierce Feaver must calcine
The body of this world like thine,
(My little World!). That fit of fire
Once off, our bodies shall aspire
To our soules bliss then we shall rise
And view our selves with cleerer eyes

In that calm Region, where no night
Can hide us from each others sight

Mean time, thou hast her, earth much good
May my harm do thee Since it stood
With Heavens will I might not call
Her longer mine, I give thee all
My short-liv'd right and interest
In her, whom living I lov'd best
With a most free and bounteous grief,
I give thee what I could not keep.
Be kind to her, and prethee look
Thou write into thy Dooms-day book
Each parcell of this Rarity
Which in thy Casket shrin'd doth ly
See that thou make thy reck'ning streight,
And yield her back again by weight,
For thou must audit on thy trust
Each graine and atome of this dust,
As thou wilt answer *Him* that lent,
Not gave thee, my dear Monument

So close the ground, and 'bout her shade
Black curtains draw, my *Bride* is laid

Sleep on my *Love* in thy cold bed
Never to be disquieted!
My last good night! Thou wilt not wake
Till I thy fate shall overtake
Till age, or grief, or sickness must
Marry my body to that dust
It so much loves, and fill the room
My heart keeps empty in thy Tomb
Stay for me there, I will not faile
To meet thee in that hollow Vale
And think not much of my delay,

I am already on the way,
And follow thee with all the speed
Desire can make, or sorrows breed
Each minute is a short degree,
And ev'ry houre a step towards thee
At night when I betake to rest,
Next morn I rise neerer my West
Of life, almost by eight houres saile,
Than when sleep breath'd his drowsie gale

Thus from the Sun my Bottom steers,
And my dayes Compass downward bears
Nor labour I to stemme the tide
Through which to *Thee* I swiftly glide

Tis true, with shame and grief I yield,
Thou like the *Vann* first took'st the field,
And gotten hast the victory
In thus adventuring to dy
Before me, whose more years might crave
A just precedence in the grave.
But heark! My pulse like a soft Drum
Beats my approach, tells *Thee* I come,
And slow howere my marches be,
I shall at last sit down by *Thee*

The thought of this bids me go on,
And wait my dissolution
With hope and comfort *Dear* (forgive
The crime) I am content to live
Divided, with but half a heart,
Till we shall meet and never part.

JOHN DONNE

Goodfriday, 1613: Riding Westward

Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,
The intelligence that moves, devotion is,
And as the other Spheares, by being growne
Subject to forraigne motions, lose their owne,
And being by others hurried every day,
Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey
Pleasure or businesse, so, our Soules admit
For their first mover, and are whirld by it.
Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West
This day, when my Soules forme bends toward the East.
There I should see a Sunne, by rising set,
And by that setting endlesse day beget,
But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,
Sinne had eternally benighted all.
Yet dare I almost be glad, I do not see
That spectacle of too much weight for mee
Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must dye,
What a death were it then to see God dye?
It made his owne Lieutenant Nature shrinke,
It made his footstoole crack, and the Sunne winke
Could I behold those hands which span the Poles,
And tune all spheares at once, peirc'd with those holes?
Could I behold that endlesse height which is
Zenith to us, and to our Antipodes,
Humbled below us? or that blood which is
The seat of all our Soules, if not of his,
Make durt of dust, or that flesh which was worne

By God, for his apparell, rag'd, and torne?
If on these things I durst not looke, durst I
Upon his miserable mother cast mine eye,
Who was Gods partner here, and furnish'd thus
Halfe of that Sacrifice, which ransom'd us?
Though these things, as I hide, be from mine eye,
They'are present yet unto my memory
For that looks towards them, and thou look'st towards mee,
O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree,
I turne my backe to thee, but to receive
Corrections, till thy mercies bid thee leave
O thinke mee worth thine anger, punish mee,
Burne off my rusts, and my deformity,
Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace,
That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face

ANDREW MARVELL

To his Coy Mistress

Had we but World enough, and Time,
This coyness Lady were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long Loves Day.
Thou by the *Indian Ganges* side
Should'st rubies find I by the Tide
Of *Humber* would complain I would
Love you ten years before the Flood
And you should if you please refuse
Till the Conversion of the *Jews*
My vegetable Love should grow
Vaster than Empires, and more slow
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine Eyes, and on thy Forehead Gaze
Two hundred to adore each Breast
But thirty thousand to the rest.
An Age at least to every part,
And the last Age should show your Heart
For Lady you deserve this State,
Nor would I love at lower rate

But at my back I alwaies hear
Times winged Charriot hurrying near
And yonder all before us lye
Desarts of vast Eternity
Thy Beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble Vault, shall sound

My ecchoing Song then Worms shall try
That long preserv'd Virginity
And your quant Honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my Lust
The Grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace

Now therefore, while the youthful hew
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing Soul transpires
At every pore with instant Fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
Rather at once our Time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapt pow'r
Let us roll all our Strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one Ball
And tear our Pleasures with rough strife,
Thorough the Iron gates of Life
Thus, though we cannot make our Sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run

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I Hymns and Anthems

It seems well to begin with some poems that are probably familiar to many readers: poems still in use as hymns, songs whose simplicity and directness are real. They were composed for music, and obey the needs of music—firm, dependable metres, each stanza a replica of the others, refrains, and so on. *Vertue* is the only one of this group not definitely for music, but it perfectly exemplifies the effect of Herbert's feeling for music and the disciplines of song, whether it was ever sung or not. Simplicity, neatness, directness, candour—these are the first-apparent qualities. But they give us less than the whole truth. The very familiarity of one or two of these poems may have set scales to our eyes which the chance to read them carefully and sensitively can remove. However he aspires to simplicity, Herbert cannot, and will not, altogether restrain his habitual delicacy and acumen, his are perhaps the most *pointed* hymns to be found in our hymn-books. It will be an unusual group reading these poems together that contains even one reader who can claim to have engaged all the points of the famous *Elixir*. To begin with, he or she will need to have been attentive enough to realize that the versions usually sung have something missing, have an awkward hiatus in the development of the theme and to have looked up the original to discover verse 2. There is no better way to come at Herbert's quality than this realizing how much more he demands, and how much more he has to offer, than the majority of hymn-writers.

Praise, for instance, requires a sharper attention than we are used to giving the hymns we sing in Church, or at an assembly.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee

This third verse reminds us that the simplicity of such song, its dignified sincerity, represent for Herbert an achievement of 'utmost art' It has not come easily And that art is not a matter of superficial expertise, for Herbert by rhyme and by stress joins the word 'heart' to it His utmost art in verse is to cream off the richness of his heart's feeling and offer that to God The image is homely and practical and quite without false pride or reservation, it tastes upon the tongue, it belongs in the kitchen and the dairy

How, then, does this 'utmost art' show itself here? First, in the candour and unaffected dignity everyone notices That does not come easily or unsought, as any will know who have tried to get an equal dignity and sincerity into a poem or prayer of their own There is a complete, unfeigned self-giving in praise like this that is costly to the spirit, and still requires hard exercise of skill Then observe the verses of the song as a sequence They alternate a verse to God and a verse to myself The verses for 'thee' are quick with impulsive delight like the one quoted, or like

Sev'n whole dayes, not one in seven,
I will praise thee.
In my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee

But as soon as we take our attention from the alternating sequence and fasten upon one of its verses, something else strikes home The second of those couplets is not easily to be exhausted There is always room, the words say, for God to be lifted higher in the heart's esteem, for He is never high enough, He is never so high as He ought to be, never so high but it lies within the heart's real capacity to set Him higher ('I *can* raise thee') Then the qualifying clause 'though not in heaven' enriches the meaning further

He is unimaginably beyond any adequate praising by any human heart, 'high as the heavens are from the earth' When we meditate those two thoughts together, the couplet suggests a third meaning, deeper, and arising from the conjunction The heart that raises up its Lord is conscious how far from being itself 'in heaven' it is, by the very need of so exerting itself to raise Him

Now this is not so much complicated thinking as rich thinking thinking a sudden accumulation of thoughts, deeply connected with each other, and thinking them in one glad, economical utterance We get a sense of pressure upon the words and upon the syntax Herbert does not use our language in an enigmatic or astonishing fashion, but he makes ordinary, unobtrusive speech work very hard, he senses and controls extraordinary suggestions in it

Leaving aside for the moment the penultimate verse, which follows a pattern of its own, the next God-centred verse is the last of the poem Given the clue that 'extoll' has properly the meaning 'lift up' as well as its current 'give honour to' it will be worth working out some of the ways in which that final verse really is final and draws into itself those pairs of verbs that have successively dominated each alternate verse, the first, the third and the fifth But once we have those verbs before us, we shall also have our senses sharpened for Herbert's subtle and pointed use of syntax itself He has made a metrical shape for his poem that brings each pair of lines to culminate in a verb, an active verb, with 'thee', or 'me', as its object Little wonder that the praise throughout feels like a real activity, not a routine devotion Those verbs take the weight as the voice naturally speaks the couplet, they share with 'thee' and 'me' the musical weight of the rhyming, and any trained musician of Herbert's time, setting the lines, would have followed the instinctive impetus and rhythm of the voice in his melodic line and the phrasing of it. (Having noted, now, the musical weight attaching to the rhymes of those verbs and objects, this would be a good moment at which to pause and enquire just what Herbert gains in the

joining together of each rhyming word throughout—as, earlier, we noticed the point of joining ‘art’ with ‘heart’)

Very possibly, though, bent upon this new attention, and starting with the first verse, we shall be held up by something else

King of Glorie, King of Peace,
I will love thee
And that love may never cease,
I will move thee

The second couplet there is busy, not only with ‘love’ and ‘move’ but with setting in motion the continual changing of places between ‘thee’ and ‘me’, the praised and the praiser, which offered a clue to the poem’s structure ‘I will love thee’ makes the loving of God the result of human willing, simply and Herbert’s alert mind is quick to notice a discrepancy We do not so simply control our affections, least of all our capacity to love God That will not do for valid theology, and it will not do for moral honesty either God is the Cause, He is the First Mover, He is the creator of the heart that loves, the sustainer of that love within the heart And so, like someone catching himself out in a rash promise to do more than he can, Herbert modifies ‘I will love thee’ with a prayer to the First Mover that the love may be unceasingly sustained For there is another sense of that word in which man, in his turn, may ‘move’ God Now we can see better *why* in the second verse subject and object change place—and why the changes continue from verse to verse This is a verse about ‘me’, and God, therefore, is its Subject and with what gay emphasis Herbert drives home the point—every line, not merely every other line, begins with ‘Thou’ If we go on to trace out ‘thou’ and ‘me’ from verse to verse we find with every change some delicate significance

Now that we have come to the verses about ‘me’ we should observe a difference in their tone and rhythm The buoyancy and thrust have gone, and we have to find quite other terms to describe what takes their place The perplexities that beset the

self, once it, not God, is the object, make for difficulties of speech. No sooner, for instance, has 'the cream of all my heart' been named than it curdles. In the next lines the clamorous noises of sin's making drown the song of praise Herbert desires to offer. And even when God restores the penitent, it is those clamorous sins that interrupt, making answer for him, rudely shouting down the deeper, speechless gratitude of his true self. Yet this difficult verse about the thwarted self is still a praise of God. For He listens to and hears, not the clamour, but the penitence, He matches courtesy with courtesy.

And alone, when they reply'd
Thou didst hear me

(That is, both 'You had ears only for me, despite the noise of their reply' and 'You heard, and you are the only one who could and did'. The placing of that word 'alone' so as to *command* both readings of the syntax is a characteristic touch.)

The poem reaches the fine point of its art, and its intensity, in the last verse but one. What, we have to ask, has dropped out, here, as we look back over the pattern of the whole so far? And then, why does this omission enable the final verse to sound so secure at last? And then, what ought we to make of the rhyming words that end each couplet of this verse? These are the kind of questions to pursue—and this more malicious one, too: why do the hymn-books choose this verse for omission?

Praise (albeit damagingly cut) is one of the 'familiar' Herbert poems, one of the hymns we may have sung often as if it made no real demands on our intelligence or our honesty in appraising ourselves. It is not more demanding, however, than the famous *Elixir*, and we need to give the same kind of attentiveness to the other poems in this group. Hymns by the two among Herbert's predecessors, to whom he stands nearest in style and tone, are added for comparison; and a hymn very much in Herbert's manner, but adding a gently mystical conviction, by Henry Vaughan, his admirer and avowed disciple.

Notes

PRAISE (II)

Several titles, in *The Temple*, serve Herbert for more than one poem. This is the second *Praise*.

The very first couplet announces the two paradoxical sides to Herbert's faith that pervade all his poems: the Kingship of Christ ('How sweetly doth *My Master* sound! *My Master*!') and the unforced candour of personal access and personal relationship with Him.

For an approach to this poem different from that suggested in the critical commentary, it is worth seeing what has become of Psalm 116 in this transformation of it. Use the Prayer Book version, preferably.

Thou grew'st soft this verse needs to be read aloud (indeed, sung if possible) for its point and nature to come fully home.

ANTIPHON (I)

Must bear the longest part the reference is to part-singing in choir or madrigal consort. The certain meaning is 'chief, or most important part'—but 'fundamental part' would bring out the musical implication well. For probably the suggestion behind *longest* is of the most active part-line, containing the major proportion of sustained notes, a foundation for the harmony.

There is a sonnet by John Donne beginning *At the round earth's imagin'd corners sing*, and Herbert's cosmography here is worth pausing on.

VERTUE

The span of Herbert's life was the great age of the madrigal and air in English music. A glance at a few of the finest Elizabethan

songs—by Campion, say, or Dowland—would make a good preliminary to this poem (See E H Fellowes' *English Madrigal Verse, 1588-1632*)

Sweet Spring it is difficult for us to rescue, and respond freshly to, the key-word of this poem. It has gone soft for us. But the third verse insists that we try

My musick shows the verse-ending throughout the poem is itself a 'dying fall', an imitation of a cadence in music. Herbert makes delicate play with the situation. His metre has suggested musical possibilities, by implication he now requires the composer's collaboration. Between them, they point up the sense of the lines

THE ELIXIR

There is no need of specialized knowledge in alchemy for a reading that will take the subtlety and edge of this poem. But the reader does need to grasp what the elixir was for the alchemists, and to gloss the technical terms carefully. If Ben Jonson's play can be called to mind, so much the better—it will keep one alert to the pursuit of riches implicit in so much 'popular' alchemy and certainly Herbert has this in mind

This is one of the poems that survives in an earlier version, and reveals both Herbert's skill in revision, and the care he took to revise and perfect his work. Originally the poem was called *Perfection*. The first verse read thus

Lord teach me to referr
All things I doe to thee
That I not onely may not err
But also pleasing be.

The second verse of our *Elixir* does not appear in *Perfection* at all. After our third verse comes one which Herbert deleted as a whole

He that does aught for thee,
Marketh that deed for thine

And when the Diuel shakes the tree,
Thou saist, this fruit is mine.

The original final verse read thus

But these are high perfections
Happy are they that dare
Lett in the Light to all their actions
And show them as they are

Herbert was dissatisfied and struck it through, and substituted the last verse we now have. There are losses in the final *Elixir*, but there are more than compensating gains. How characteristic of Herbert that, once he has the notion of alchemy, he makes it *transmute* the whole poem.

Not rudely, as a beast . the reader may find it worth looking up Hamlet's last soliloquy

Which with his tincture . *his* has the force of the modern *its*. With this verse, compare the claim in Herbert's prose treatise, *The Country Parson*, 'Nothing is little in God's service. If it once have the honour of that Name, it grows great instantly.'

THE 23D PSALME

Herbert draws upon the Coverdale version in the Prayer Book, as well as upon the Authorized Version of the Bible. He makes use of the version in Sternhold and Hopkins's complete *Metrical Versions of the Psalms*.

The reader will prefer to make his own notes of Herbert's changes—every slight modification has its point. Though (characteristically) many hymn-books miss it out, Herbert does not balk at the harshness of verse 5, but observe how he transforms its vindictiveness with the suggestion of the communion table.

The versing of this psalm by Sidney appears next, inviting comparison. But there are other comparisons no less rewarding and

fascinating that the reader may like to make with Addison's version, representing the Augustan age, and with the Victorian hymn that may be all too familiar. Hymn-books will provide all the versions referred to here except Sidney's

While he is mine a modification of the verse from the *Song of Songs*, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his' (11 16)

thy staffe to bear primarily, no doubt, 'to bear me up', provide me with support. There may be some suggestion of 'giving me my bearings'

Philip Sidney's PSALM XXIII

The variety and the point of Sidney's metrical innovations in his paraphrases of the first forty psalms may well have suggested much to Herbert, and this is a fine example. But more than the delicate handling of metre and movement, the unassuming intimacy, the tenderness, of the tone of address, bring us close to the later poet

Robert Southwell's NEW PRINCE, NEW POMPE

Southwell was a Jesuit priest who died, a martyr, in 1595. In discovering paradox and irony, as it were *inside* the Christian story, and eliciting these directly into meditative or devotional verse, Southwell has as good a claim as any to be the pioneer of divine poetry in this tradition. The note of frank homelessness in the poem chosen makes it apt for comparison with Herbert

It is uncertain how the text should be printed—there is at present no established version of Southwell's poems. Some would reject the division into four-line stanzas and print the poem continuously

Henry Vaughan's PEACE

Vaughan was a Welsh doctor, a convinced adherent of the Church, his faith illumined by mystical experience. He was a devoted admirer of Herbert, and modelled many of his divine

poems directly upon those of his master. His first collection, *Silex Scintillans*, was published in 1650—his work belongs to a later period than Herbert's.

He is thy gracious friend . . . observe in such a couplet as this how a note like Herbert's is qualified by something very different.

II His Quick-piercing Mind

Even in poems whose aim it is to remain song-like, susceptible of musical accompaniment, and therefore immediately expressive in a simple way, Herbert exacts from us an alert attention. So the poems we have read this far have suggested. The purpose of the group we come to now is to reflect the personal note that sounds in his work—what makes his poems peculiarly his own, and adds a distinctive flavour to English poetry. We find here some indication of his range of interests, of his methods as a poet, of his idiom, turn of phrase, and tones of speech. We are made sharply aware of a manner, a way with himself and others that affects us directly, and yet is not easy to sum up. It has candour, and a certain force, yet it is unassertive, it does not push the self forward, and yet again it is unreserved, unconcealing. The manner is before all else courteous. Herbert's kinship with Sir Philip Sidney goes deep. His is the manner, in a later age, of the perfect Elizabethan courtier, the gentle man, poised, assured yet deferential. He is God's courtier, and everyone's gentleman in His name. So we find in the poems a way of speech that is never rude or assertive or overbearing or ungallant (unless the poem is to bring to light, dramatize, and rebuke some failure in himself). We find an unfailing tact that we come to take for granted, but we can check upon it by looking again at the material Herbert handles in any one of the poems in this group—and reflecting upon the pitfalls, upon how easily a false note might have been struck, how tiny indelicacies could have marred all. We can detect the grace, the considerateness, the attitude of incipient tenderness, in phrase after phrase that open the poems.

Busie enquiring heart, what wouldst thou know?
Why dost thou prie,

Love bade me welcome yet my soul drew back

It would, it would draw back, expressing its embarrassed sense of 'pushing forward' by resuming modesty, claiming no status

The character we feel in this verse is remarkably endowed with innate considerate courtesy, it is also endowed with intellectual bite, acute and varied interests, a wide and stored experience of men and affairs, introspective astuteness, and an unusual power of quizzical half-humorous self-regard. It is a character with an outgoing instinct to *feel* life, and get that life into language. These are general suggestions that the reader may wish to check against particular poems. But a further suggestion holds good for nearly all of them, and may prove a useful way into their individuality, you are always listening to a voice in a Herbert poem. His feeling for the variety of tone, of rhythm and impetus that belongs to the human voice, seems inexhaustible, and it is this, as much as anything, that creates for us the sense of immediacy, of presence, of actual human experience, as we read his poems now. Rarely, too, is a poem composed of one voice, even one voice in altering registers and paces. There comes the further jolt of dramatic actuality when another voice, when the divine Voice itself even, speaks to him, or interrupts his self-communing. And Herbert's command of the exactly appropriate tone or nuance for that other Voice is like a dramatist's or a novelist's: it vindicates the depth of his understanding of the whole situation out of which the voices speak. Consider, in this light, the voices of *The Quip*, or trace the changing tones through *Redemption* with its gentle but astonishing answering Voice which so overwhelms the raconteur that his tale abruptly ends.

A last suggestion for the reader to test out, first with the *Jordan* poems about the poet-priest's art, and then with others. What aligns Herbert not only with other, and greater, poets but also with faithful craftsmen in all skills and in all ages, is his dedication to perfect workmanship. The finest workmanship is

for him the test of truth, of self-submission to a higher standard of total accuracy than any less skilled way with language exacts. In poem after poem, and at one point after another, we need to focus our attention with the enquiry, why is it so and not otherwise, for the answer, the most delicate and exact answer we can manage, will surely let us further into the truth the poem holds, into the kind of experience to be found there. Not only is Herbert—to judge simply by the range of interests and perceptions his imagery, vocabulary, and proverbial phrases exhibit—the very type of the creative and imaginative artist, ‘a man on whom nothing is lost’, he also makes poems in which nothing is lost. Everything about his poem—its tone of voice, its metrical pattern, its rhythmical movement from line to line, its shape and size, its emblems and images—joins to become an *action* of its theme. Each poem is a small drama, and each facet of workmanship is an actor with some distinct rôle necessary for the whole. Rhymes, for instance, will constantly be found exerting a subtle pressure of their own, joining two reluctant partners, opposing concealed adversaries to one another, establishing relationships across the lines. Nor did Herbert find any of the more trivial skills of word-play too flippant to be brought into service now and again. He has a fine judgment of just what kind of poem to make, in order to explore, and offer in all clarity and distinctness in the sight of God, this or that experience, or act of faith, or hope. He was, we have to remember, a highly trained and gifted rhetorician, he knew the skills of manipulation, of persuasion and argument, of versification. The variety of his inventions and innovations just about matches the variety of his enquiries into the predicaments and moods of the devoted, yet always wayward, human spirit. Each poem becomes an emblem and an action of its theme.

Demall, for example, is a poem (looking forward in this sense to those of our next section) of spiritual disappointment, of thwarted hope and a sense of uselessness. One look at the stanza-pattern is enough to suggest the pushes and pulls of the vexed, uneasy self. Take the third line of each verse—the prolonged one,

where the complaint, the sense of grievance, gets its unhindered release. The first of them offers the clue to the metre and rhyming of the whole poem.

Then was my heart broken, as was my verse

Read aloud (as it has to be) the very line of statement has the nerveless 'broken' rhythm it speaks of, and it suggests how the disordered, unco-operative, unrhyming, irregularly rhymed poem as a whole acts out the condition it speaks of. Looking down those third lines, we notice how nearly that of the fourth verse repeats that of the third and indeed it is so with the verses as a whole. For Herbert's poetry has hold of that special attribute of the sense of vexed frustration—its tendency to repeat itself, the plantiveness changing its terms ever so little, the whine remaining. An exact psychological touch: the key phrase, the gist of the complaint, at the end of each verse, doesn't even make the gesture of minor change. It insists. Then with the long line of the fifth verse a motion of self-rebuke comes in, a hint of 'a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart' which God will not despise.

My feeble spirit, unable to look right,

And to speak that line is to feel a new rhythmical firmness, catching the natural bent of the line-length, preparatory for the last verse, whose clear, deliberate

That so thy favours granting my request

feels right at last

This is one way—there are others—of tracing out in its movement the poem's establishment of order and patience in the dispirited self, by establishing the order implicit in the stanza's pattern, though obscured at first. The home-thrust, of course, is the dedication of rhyme to the same purpose. The denial of a final expected rhyme at the end of a verse has a peculiarly strong effect, it leaves a door open, it fails to clinch the issue, it is more fuddling than the mere denial of a rhyme *en route*. Herbert's refusals of that end-rhyme take varied and pointed forms. The

first refusing word—*disorder*—gives us the significance of the refusals, and, a three-syllable, light-ending, hard word against the expected single-syllable rhyme with *eares*, it judders the rhythm at the same moment as it defeats *our* 'eares' by denying what they expect. Different subtleties work towards a similar dislocation (with a heavy-ending word) in the second stanza, but the repeated refusals of the middle two stanzas affect us more directly, through the lameness of the final word against the rhyme-expectations, through its appeal to *our* 'hearing', and through the simultaneous collapse of the verbal rhythms into inertness, indolence. *Discontented*, in the last stanza but one, has a wilful edge to its refusal. We feel a sort of perverse game by now, an enjoyment of being awkward. So the effect at the end of the last stanza, and the end of the wilful poem, is masterly. The ear and the nervous system are set at rest together as we listen and feel, the 'normal' pattern of rhythm, cadence, and rhyme establishes itself—and we say 'normal' because underneath the disturbed surface, all along, we have felt its inevitable coming. To the last word, the *action* of the poem is as much a matter of what the words say, and mean, as what they do. For *chime* has a double point. It speaks at once of a *rhythmical* togetherness, and a *harmonious* unison: and then again, it evokes the peal of bells that rings to devotion, it calls upon deep, instinctive habits—even if, from time to time, devotion fails to bring its expected peace of mind. This delicate wit, working through the very grain of our language, we need to detect in such phrases as *heartlesse breast*, and *silent eares*, and *thunder of alarms*. And as we take to ourselves the force and point of the images, we need to alert ourselves especially to the treating of music and the sense of hearing. That is the sense called into play by a poetry of rhyme-denial: and when the penultimate stanza gives us the discarded lute, we recollect that music, in Herbert's day, was not only a deep joy and consolation ('my heaven on earth' he himself called it) but veritably a type of heaven, a re-creation of the Divine Order, the music of the circling spheres, the music that restores King Lear, and celebrates the return of Portia to Belmont. The

soul *untun'd, unstrung* is unprepared to recitate that Divine Harmony, or to partake in it Like a *npt blossom* (how sharp and painful the *npt* feels alongside the fullness of *blossome*—but what a salutary reduction of scale, too the soul mustn't be encouraged to think of itself under comparisons too lofty) it is unable to *look right*, to be itself in nature

The poem, as a poem, never doubts that Order, that nature, never doubts that the divine answer will come, when it will come The implied pattern beneath the disturbed stanza waits patiently—observing the distractions and vexations of the sorry and wilful human spirit—for the time of mending Nor has this discussion at all exhausted the varieties of that pattern, nor even touched upon the variety of vocal tone and nuance there is much attention still to be focussed

The three poems added to this group for comparison, and to suggest a context in which to set the personal note of Herbert, are chosen not for any likeness to Herbert, but for achievements of 'character' quite different from his They share—Donne's, especially—the dedication of technique to acting out what the poem affirms, but they will serve to bring home what variety of style and character found a place in the tradition

Notes

DENIAL

Untun'd, unstrung it would be worth looking up Ulysses' speech on Order, and its reference to music, to feel the full suggestion of this image (*Troilus and Cressida*, I 3)

O cheer and tune . a 'packed' line if ever there was one in Herbert, best to pause over the verbs.

JORDAN (I)

Herbert's placing of the name of the river Jordan above his two poems about the poet's art has more than one significance It is

the river of Grace in which the Christian poet bathes, as against the Helicon of pagan inspiration. The crossing of it is the traditional symbol of complete conversion, or accepted redemption. And (2 *Kings*, v, should be consulted) that river is the source of true cleanliness, a washing away of all defilement.

It may well be a mistake to read this poem as an 'attack' upon this school or that, on fantastic or decorative or witty and ingenious styles, on conventional forms of courtly love poetry, or any others. Herbert's moral is for himself, Jordan is *his* experience. His protest, if protest it is, seems to be against the usurpation by love poets of the whole realm of poetic art. There are other claims to be staked out—and a language appropriate for those claims.

sudden arbours the art of the designer of gardens and landscapes lay partly in taking the viewer by surprise with an unexpected enclosure.

Who plainly say 'There is for this writer another way, which he announces with all the exaggeration of a convert' (L. Martz). This is an equivocal, humorous poem (in one of its aspects), and evidently not a manifesto. The next *Jordan* poem modifies its pronouncements a little—and so does the finest of Herbert's poetry!

THE QUIP

There's no finer poem, for a study of Herbert's dramatic mastery in handling the voice.

Then came quick Wit but we don't in fact *hear* him. It is a metrical touch we have here, one of Herbert's most delightful.

DIALOGUE

But when all my care nothing the poor wretch can do (for himself) will make the possession of his soul a 'positive asset'—one gets the point best by using modern business-transaction jargon.

Get without repining to whom does the *repining* apply?

My glorie and desert as we find in Marvell's *Coy Mistress*, the word was pronounced, and often spelt, *desart*

GIDDINESSE

And snudge in quiet this fine old word means both 'to remain snug and quiet' and 'to be stingy, having one's gains for oneself'

Like a Dolphins skinne . 'a fish like a mackerel, its metallic colours undergo rapid changes on its being taken out of the water and about to die, but it cannot be inferred that the changes have any relation to its *desires*'. (Canon Hutchinson)

Thou make us dayly 2 *Corinthians*, iv 16, may be consulted

REDEMPTION

The poem takes the form of a sonnet, and it uses the mode (in part) of allegory in both these ways, it would have seemed 'old-fashioned' What happens, therefore, as the quiet matter-of-fact voice explaining a legal transaction becomes tense with the frustrations of the search is the more moving and disturbing against the old-fashioned framework

Notice that the conventions of a legal document are preserved even in the poignant final words, and consider how those two words, thus spelt, act upon one another

HOPE

'One can accept the poem without plunging deeply into its meaning, because of the bump with which the short lines, giving the flat, poor, surprising answer of reality, break the momentum of the long hopeful lines in which a new effort has been made The movement is so impeccable as to be almost independent of the meaning of the symbols.

'And, indeed, the symbols themselves seem almost to be used in a way familiar to the mathematician, as when a set of letters may stand for any numbers of a certain sort, and you are not

curious to know which numbers are meant because you are only interested in the relations between them' (Empson)

This is an ideal starting-point for experiencing the poem, and the reader is urged not to consult what follows, nor to continue reading the remarkably suggestive discussion in Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, until the poem has been directly enjoyed, its images felt and taken to heart, and allowed to speak for themselves

a watch the brevity of human time? the regular speed with which time passes? that the time for fulfilment of hopes is overdue?—the last suggestion has particularly the implication of the delicate *hint*, so right in point of manners for the poem's courtesy

an anchor the need to endure, to hold on for a long time yet—and, perhaps, to expect little progress or movement? And is it, perhaps, the certain hope of redemption, or of resurrection—in view of the watch?

an old prayer-book for the prayers used in regular and constant devotions? for the ordered routine of spiritual life?

an optick is it the faith that searches the heavens? or an aid to descry help afar off? or the far distance at which hope's fulfilments remain? or the eyes lifted from close poring over that prayer-book towards rare illumination?

a viall full of tears . . of repentance? or of sorrow and pain for long-delayed fulfilment? or of regret for this world's pleasures, renounced to so little apparent purpose?

a few green eares each reply seems more pointed, yet enigmatic. Is this an equally delicate hint of present spiritual immaturity, delightfully coupled with the promise of harvest to come?

a ring the perfect sign of eternity (which Vaughan saw 'like a great Ring'), and, perhaps, of union with God, or through His Church, with Christ—remember how the *Song of Songs* was

still interpreted at this time Empson suggests—and it quickens one's feeling for the poem, indeed—that a halo may be intended here, too, and that Herbert projects as the speaker one whose disappointment has not put him past vanity

The anchor was itself an emblem of Hope, traditionally, in Herbert's time

SINNES ROUND

As with *Deniall*, there is a dedicated artifice in this poem easy to appreciate, and, as with *Deniall*, that is only a starting-point. The poem is a very subtle one

The Sicilian Hill . . . Mount Etna

This poem makes an admirable study for those interested in the range and thrust of Herbert's diction

JORDAN (II)

The first and third of Sidney's Sonnets to Stella should be read alongside this poem. Professor Martz goes so far as to call it 'a superb example of sacred parody'. The poem was originally titled *Invention* (see glossary)

This poem ought not to be read simply as a recantation, an abandonment of rhetorical skills, a renunciation of Donne and a choice for Sidney any more than *Jordan* (I) should be read simply as an attack. It is a colloquy with the self about the nature, and the difficulty, of sincerity, and about the *temptations* that skill in eloquence, and subtlety of mind and imagination, bring with them. To 'weave my self into the sense' for Herbert meant vanity, and a tainting of real understanding. Poetry, which should be self-forgetfulness, becomes self-glorification.

How wide is all this . . . Wide of the mark, and at the same time, like a cavity, empty

LOVE

The taking of a meal together as the traditional expression of

true friendship, as well as the communion table of the altar, underlies the climax of this poem. The extraordinary fineness of its courtesies makes it apt for study alongside *The Collar* each illuminates the other in point of the significance of manners. The reader may like to pass by the three poems in between, and go straight to the far extreme of rudeness—still at the communion table—with 'I struck the board . . '

Thomas Carew's LINES FOR MARIA WENTWORTH

Carew was a courtier and diplomat, poet and wit, who died in 1640. Nearly all of his verse is secular—love poetry for the most part, blending the elegance and refinement of the line of Ben Jonson with the sharpness and daring of mind and imagination characteristic also of Donne and Herbert.

John Donne's HOLY SONNET X

John Donne, like Herbert, passed from a brilliant and varied youth, in which remarkable endowments of mind and personality revealed themselves, through a gradual change of heart that led eventually to his taking Holy Orders. In the Church he rose to eminence, and as Dean of St Paul's was the most celebrated, and the finest, preacher of his day. He is the pre-eminent metaphysical poet—not least because of the range of his styles and interests. His poems extend from the most flippant and cynical love-jests to the most anguished and personal religious meditations.

Holy Sonnet X has been chosen to suggest a force of personality, and a passion of mind and imagination, far exceeding Herbert's. But it is as much an action of its theme as any of Herbert's poems, and needs excited, concentrated attention.

Henry Vaughan's THE MORNING WATCH

At first reading, perhaps, impetuous exaltation quieting itself to humble prayer may seem the whole of this poem. But its shape reveals itself as carefully and meaningfully woven—a

metric that, like so many of Herbert's, subtly controls the direction of thought and feeling. The poem has been chosen, and set next to Donne's, to bring home what widely different poetic temperaments found ways to express themselves in the 'Divine Poetry' of the age.

III The Many Spiritual Conflicts

When we have studied sensitively enough the two *Jordan* poems, we know that the dedication of his heart and skill to the making of a true poem was not a simple matter for Herbert. It wasn't only an aesthetic matter either. It meant a moral struggle, a struggle to achieve what we easily call sincerity, no doubt, but much more a struggle to achieve sincerity before God, a realization of what in the last resort, with all pretences and disguises shed, the self actually is, and is like. His earlier verse had been officially dedicated to heaven; but, in recollection, and seen in present perspective, seemed made of sought-after 'quant words and trim inventions', and of 'thoughts that burnisht, sprouted, swelld'. Pause on that *swelld* we feel the sense of ostentation, of vanity. And then—'*curling* with metaphor a plain intention, decking the sense . . . 'Curling' has the suggestion of an aristocratic veneer, of the nobility's elegant self-adornment, and the fop's varnished surface. With that marked change in the tone of voice which we have learned to note as enacting the moment of clearer discovery, Herbert discerns the stain in such *eloquent* 'dedication', the pride in the self-conscious skilfulness.

As flames do work and winde, when they ascend,
So did I weave my self into the sense
But while I bustled, I might heare a friend
Whisper, How wide is all this long pretence!
There is in love a sweetness readie penn'd
Copie out onely that, and save expense

If the lines propose for ideal a simplicity costly to achieve and only rarely given to a poet to achieve, they also take us into the

subtle ways of the deceiving heart Ascent is the right direction, and the image of the altar there reminds us of the kind of offering up of his art that Herbert desires But even in that act there is 'winding', there are the spiralling self-deceptions and cheats of the ascending spirit tainted with self-concern, pride, reflected glory Subtlety of metaphor and spiritual vanity are felt as facets of a single danger, and that very danger cannot be separated from the effort of dedication, the will to make the poetry pure and total, and everything a poem can be As Rosamund Tuve has it in those pages of her *A Reading of George Herbert* that deal with the *Jordan* poems (they are among the best in the book), 'The true and complete absence of self-deceit which Herbert achieves, he achieves by rooting out of himself every vestige of self-seeking, by a submission of his will to the will of Christ his master.'

So we make now the natural move from poems in which we may have interested ourselves primarily in acts of technical 'wholeness' and dedication, to the group of poems that illustrate what is humanly most representative and important in his achievement These are the poems of inner conflict, of coming to terms with himself, poems that elicit from the proud and unruly will a readiness to accept the chosen way, with all its disappointments The here and now, to which we feel his verse to be so faithful, is the experience of which all of us know some reflection, in some measure There is the feeling of dryness and uselessness, there is the tempting desire for what cannot in the nature of things be had, there is rebellion against the limits set by illness, and moodiness, and incapacity, there is the failure of faith when the very choice of vocation depends on faith's stability The essay on Herbert by L C Knights, in *Explorations*, is the most suggestive account to study by way of preparation for a full grasp upon these poems Professor Knights sees Herbert as using his poetic art to explore, adjust himself to, and resolve, his difficulties and conflicts conflicts that turn upon the need for submission of the merely personal will, and the need for rejection of the wrong kinds of success, and of temptations to cheat

disappointment by dreams of what might have been. He sees the poems as a way for Herbert to accept himself for what he is, failures and weaknesses admitted.

It is here, perhaps, that the poems may touch any of us to the quick. *Affliction (I)* or *Affliction (IV)*, two of Herbert's supreme achievements, though marvellously sure and sober, give us the raw grind of dejection and discontent with the self and its lot. Yet still the art controlling the verse is a dedicated art, an instrument of the tenacity that will absolutely hold to the hard, sharp truth of feeling and perception. The art is an instrument of insight, of clarification, directed particularly upon 'coming to terms with oneself', appraising a situation that is difficult anyway, and may be painful. Herbert's habitual honesty, his self-giving into poetry produces, we find throughout these poems, two apparently contrary effects. The moods of despair, rebellion, or vexation get the freest possible play, they seem to happen all over again in the words of the poem. Yet at the same time they are in the past, the poem of the present moment is an achievement of re-direction, renewal, submission. By its very character as a poem it offers a guarantee—maybe only the guarantee of faith—that the mood is not the reality, the reality (as in the wonderful *Pilgrimage*) is a step beyond.

Let us look, in this light, at *The Collar* the most dramatic of all, though perhaps less profoundly moving than the *Affliction* poems, *The Flower*, and *The Pilgrimage*. The poem is best read after *Love*, so that the rudeness, the lapse of characteristic manners, at the outset shall make its full effect. There are three distinct shocks. There's the dramatic shock of the action itself—'I struck the board'—as an opening to a poem, there's the verbal shock of the blasphemy—the board was the altar, the Lord's Table, and there's the shock of the personal lapse in the author of (say) *Love*—the lack of breeding, poise, consideration. It is important to appreciate this unHerbertian rudeness, for it is a clue to the real drama going on. What first strikes us is turbulent rebellion, checked by the sudden address of the Voice, and a resumption of childlike faith. The Divine Father calls, the

rebellious priest remembers who He is, and answers with the formal deference naturally owing to a father (in Herbert's time) and to God 'My Lord' Yet that does not wholly describe what happens There is present in the subtle, pointed organization of the words and the lines a sharp, undeceived watcher who knows from the brash start that the *real* childishness is *in* the turbulent rebellion, the bad manners, the violent demands for freedom Let us look down the poem What does the freedom mean but irresponsibility, unbounded self-indulgence, no restrictions, no restraints, a purposeless and incoherent living that really is 'loose as the wind'? This growing up that the poem acts out, the realizing what the outburst and the behaviour are really like, we may feel in every aspect of the poetic art *except* the buoyant, crude, outspoken, vigorous, challenging, angry, gusty tone of voice Are we to read the poem accepting that tone as manly and responsible, the tone of someone who no longer 'winks and does not see'? Yes, partly—for that is certainly how it takes itself And to that, we shall hear the final 'Child' putting revolting nature and hot temper unforgettably in their place The energy of the poem will have so caught our rebellious and gusty instincts into itself, that we experience the whole thing alongside the unmannerly banger of tables There is the Voice to respond to But there is also the poem that contains the Voice Any poem of Herbert, we have found by now, acts as if to focus something perfectly, the bad-mannered outburst, the physical intrusion (like people who bang doors), and the tacit blasphemy of the priest at the altar, are here perfectly in focus We have to respond to that focussing, that clarification, too

Take, for instance, the organization of the metre We are aware at first only of the surge and thrust, of the jab and taunt of the Voice, all the impetuosity of speech, thriving on its own rhythms of temper and release Yet controlling that surge and thrust, presenting it for our more sensitive understanding (and for his more sensitive humility), there is an organization of extreme skill Only when the divine Voice can make itself heard does the metrical pattern at last assert itself. (That Voice, we

notice, will not have the ungracious manners to interrupt, it will wait even for the garrulousness of undirected rebellion to say its say) There it is at the end a four-line stanza, of 10 syllables, 4 syllables, 8 syllables, and 6 syllables, rhyming *abab* Up to that point, the poet's scrutinizing art has so arranged the ingredients of the pattern as to form the most extreme lack of regularity compatible with the survival of even the dimmest outline The stanza-pattern is quite submerged in all the flurry and bustle The rhymes go astray We get as many as five consecutive unrhymed lines—when spiritual muddle and discord is at its height We get internal instead of line-ending rhymes—they have lost their place We find such notions as 'My lines and life are free, free as the roe' acting out their freedom by expanding ridiculously beyond the due metrical allowance Herbert's lines—his verses—are free indeed Sharp observation will reveal that almost every rhyme-link has its special point, in relation either to its defiance of the eventual *abab*, or to its occurring when the syllabic movement defies its eventual 10—4—8—6 Why, for instance, is that 'sigh and pine' of the wide open mouth kept waiting seven lines for a rhyme? So that at last, when really dry, the rhyming 'wine Before my sighs did dry it' may be offered

But what *wine* is this? No sooner have we taken the suggestion from this ridiculously (and childishly) jumbled and tangled metric, that only the divine Voice at the end can straighten out, than the images and emblems, which we thought just part of the loud-mouthed protests, begin to pinch Harvest thorn blood wine grain—the homely language of gospel parable, pulpit homily, and sacrament He struck the board, but it is still the Board, present throughout the poem (though almost lost to sight and consciousness in the noise), and the body and blood of our Lord are still the bread and the wine They are tossed about to worldly and self-indulgent purposes by the gusty voice, yet remain recognizably themselves As the thorns become a crown, and the grain of seed dies to bring forth fruit (cordial, indeed, for the heart), so by merely *being* there, and long before the rebellious spirit can hear, they also say 'Child'. The very images of the

poem, as well as the disordered metric, and the jumbled rhymes—like subtle but strong undercurrents—are saying it from the start, 'Child'

Meantime the vocabulary and the other images act out their side of the recognition, and the rebuke, no less energetically. After the bread and wine of the board come the flowers and garlands of the courtly and gay world, but they don't last. 'Blasted' hadn't then quite the rude, derisive force it has for us, but it begins a lurch towards vulgarity and offensiveness in diction, which is loose and free in another sense. The speech coarsens. There is the nasty insinuating tone of 'There is fruit, and thou hast hands'; there is the hinted but unuttered 'fly-blown' behind 'sigh-blown', there are the peremptory shouts about the death's-head, there are indecorous images, the reverse of courtly, in the cage, the rope of sands (he can't even make a sensible metaphor now, who once taught rhetoric at Cambridge). The vulgarity of diction, phrase, and image is complete—and *childish*. 'Forsake thy cage' is all very well. Collars, as well as being 'fits of anger', 'emblems of religious devotion', and 'emblems of the restraints of conscience' were used in the taming of wild animals, and used for them when tamed. They were used for madmen, too. And by the time we get to that cage, the grain of the poetry will have us enquire whether this rebellious spirit is coming from it or going towards it. Is he 'slipping the collar' (a proverbial phrase of the time) or showing how badly he needs one?

Each aspect of the poetry's focussing art, then, has suggested something of the childishness *in* the rebellion. Notice how the poem's conclusion sharpens the focus still further. Much though you may wish to, you cannot in fact read it aloud, sensitively, and make the intrusion of the Voice sudden and devastating. For that Voice, and the answer, come at the end of the firm and ordered stanza, not at the beginning. And the beginning fore-stalls the Voice, with a difficult recognition, a statement of painful clarity. 'But as I rav'd, and grew more fierce and wilde at every word.' The poem has, so to speak, focussed its experience for him, too, he has to recognize where the childishness lay,

where the irresponsibility And the qualm of recognition comes (doesn't it always?) a split second before the Other Voice speaks The word that chimes with 'Child' is the word that recognizes the whole outburst for what it was—'wilde'

And yet how compelling, how real the rebellion is To read the poem again now is still to be caught up in the tempestuous mood—for is there not something valid about it? Isn't there a place for anger and rebellion? We have to live the tension over and over again Yet it oughtn't to escape us, however we answer that question, that Herbert truly becomes himself again in the last phrase He remembers his manners, remembers, in the double sense, his station in life, remembers—if we may cast his own pun back upon him—his table manners. He is once more the priest at the altar He has not simply abandoned the temptation to unrestrained and worldly success and become a child again, he has also seen the childishness in turbulent and unruly desires and in irresponsible liberty, and become himself—very much a grown-up

It would be misleading to suggest that other poets of the age offer a poetry of conflict quite comparable with Herbert's, for the sort of poems we have in this group represent precisely Herbert's uniqueness But it could be useful to look back to Donne's *Batter my Heart*, and to read his *Hymne to God the Father*, the better to distinguish other depths of conflict, and a more immediate sense of anguish, and then, to set a mark on the opposite side of Herbert's verse, to read Marvell's *Dialogue*, where the conflict has something of the character of a game of chess The opposing forces are drawn up for battle, their relative strengths gauged, yet no real battle is joined It is delicate and urbane, but not altogether untroubled From the duet comes a quiet, bitter recognition of human limitations, soul and body each imposing restraints and limits upon the other, not far from Herbert's kinds of recognition

Notes

THE COLLAR

Me thoughts I heard . 'At one time I felt that in this well-known ending Herbert was evading the issue by simply throwing up the conflict and relapsing into the naive simplicity of childhood. But of course I was wrong. The really childish behaviour is the storm of rage in which the tempestuous desires—superbly evoked in the free movement of the verse—are directed towards an undefined "freedom". What the poem enforces is that to be "loose as the wind" is to be as incoherent and purposeless, that freedom is to be found not in some undefined "abroad", but, in Ben Jonson's phrase, "here in my bosom, and at home".' (L C Knights)

It is worth taking a good look at the poem as it stands on the page, taking it in with the eye

THE CROSSE

The title seems to have a double force, both that made explicit in the last stanza turning upon the desire sufficiently to serve and do honour to the Christ who suffered, and that implicit in the notion that each has his cross to bear. Herbert's is his weakness and sickness of body and it was a most real cross to his proud and able spirit.

The poem has close affinities with *The Collar*, and is here set next to it deliberately. 'Herbert's "cunning bosome-sinne" of discontent, due to the frustrations arising from his ill body, is explored in all its ramifications, with blasphemous murmurings and bitter accusations against God's justice, but concluding, like *The Collar*, in a whiplash of self-control and conformity with God's will' (L Martz)

And lay my threatnings . Probably, as Professor Martz suggests,

the word relates to the old verb *threap*, meaning 'to offer, positively and insistently'

Of the first three stanzas Professor Martz remarks, most suggestively

'But already the poem is revealing the true source of the speaker's trouble there is far too much insistence on the "I" and the "my" and the "me"—fourteen times in three short stanzas. The note of personal wilfulness is emphasized by the scarcely covert pride in "all my wealth and familie"—think of how all this might have added to God's honour! And then the human wilfulness comes out into the open in a tone of self-indulgent petulance, with an effect of deliberate ironic awareness

Besides, things sort not to my will,
Ev'n when my will doth studie thy renown

But suddenly, in three lines at the close, the whole edifice of self-will collapses, as we have known it would'

With but foure words, my words words, that is, that I now take
to myself, and make mine

CONFESSION

And fall, like rheumes Bacon has it that 'If there be any weak or affected part, this is sufficient to draw rheums, or humours, to it'

The first and third verses provide fine examples of Herbert's command of movement—his control of line-ending, and the stir of a phrase across the metre, so as to place the weight where it is needed, or make the voice *do* what it says. Examine the mole's activity, for instance or the secrecies of the first verse

Only an open breast a deliberate paradox, of the sort embedded in traditional Christian teaching, but 'turned' by Herbert very much to his own uses

I challenge here . 'I challenge for clarity and brightness the brightest day and the clearest diamond, at their best they shall

seem opaque and overcast compared with my heart, once cleared by confession.' Thus the prose sense But the imagery will reward a more sensitive appreciation

CONSCIENCE

'Busie old foole, unrulie Sunne' is the opening to one of Donne's most buoyant love poems

Observe the meaningful subtleties of rhyme connections, and sound-patterns, in the first stanza—there is probably no more skilful verse in all Herbert

The over-nagging, self-consciously finicky and particular conscience, that conscience which can be a source of spiritual pride, and the death of joy, is the conscience addressed

AFFLICTION (I)

There are two discussions of this poem that the reader should take care to consult One—Empson's in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*—explores Herbert's use of paradox in the final couplet, in the light of the poem as a whole The other occupies the central pages of L C Knight's chapter on Herbert in *Explorations*

When first thou didst entice 'In the masterly verse of *Affliction I* we have one of the most remarkable records in the language of the achievement of maturity and of the inevitable pains of the process In the opening stanzas, movement and imagery combine to evoke the enchanted world of early manhood But implicit in the description—as we see from "entice" and "entwine" and the phrase "argu'd into hopes"—is the admission that there is enchantment, an element of illusion' (L C Knights.)

The reader may profitably take up the clue of attention to the verbs that beset the poet, specially in the 7th stanza

Psalm 31 (in the Prayer Book version) should be read as implied background to the whole poem, especially to its end

My flesh began unto my soul the verb is used idiomatically in

the biblical way—'began to say' The next three lines, with their verbs in the present tense, speak for the flesh

My friends die the deaths of so many of his influential friends and patrons played a significant part in that period of depression and crisis which preceded Herbert's resolve to take orders (See introductory biography)

Whereas my birth and spirit after a succession of stanzas giving us the sense of pain, weakness, and despair with such immediacy, we have an equally direct expression of the sense of inner division and doubt The 'prose sense' of these stanzas needs careful elucidation

Yet me from my wayes taking observe the rôle of the personal pronoun in the 'drama' of this poem

Ah my deare God the paradox is of the kind deliberately to bring the reader—and the speaker—up sharp We do well to start by holding tenaciously to the primary meaning Canon Hutchinson puts it thus 'If he cannot hold on to his love of God even when he feels forsaken and unrewarded, he had better not hope to love at all'

But we keep a little closer to Herbert's formulation, perhaps, by emphasizing that to love God is the proper end and function of the human spirit, it is blessedness but that condition cannot come, save in love of God for His own sake—purely To paraphrase, 'Let me not enjoy the blessed privilege of loving thee, unless I love thee for thy own sake, through every trial, and with no other desire or motive than to love thee'

Compare the ends of some of the later sonnets of Sidney: notably Sonnet 61

AFFLICTION (IV)

Both the *Affliction* poems will reward a reader's concern with their shape and metrical pattern, their 'order'

My thoughts are all . 'He would often say, *He had a Wit like a Pen-Knife in a narrow sheath, too sharp for his Body*' (Walton's

Life) This second verse holds very contrary feelings and impulses in balance together, the images need careful attention. Note how the word *scatter'd* is picked up later in the poem.

Till I reach heav'n . this last line should be compared with the last line of *Affliction* (I) each illuminates the other.

THE PEARL

'*The Pearl* is addressed to God, but the speaker is a courtier who hardly acknowledges the object of his address for the first three stanzas. In them he proclaims his knowledge of the ways of Learning, Honour and Pleasure, the courtly trinity, with his rejection implied only in the refrain line. The speech is witty, proving the knowledge, and the accents are proper to such speech. But after the rhetorical descriptions, the poem abandons courtly boasting for grave address. The heightened speech of the conclusion finally establishes the iambic norm. The resolution of the last two lines is all the more conclusive after the daring rhythmical evocation of the labyrinths' (J. H. Summeis)

The reference to St. Matthew's Gospel, xiii 45, is given alongside the poem's title. Herbert meant that it should be consulted.

The head and pipes . it would be characteristic of Herbert to shift the metaphor from the wine-press to the printing-press. The *head* may be the fountain of knowledge, the universities, and the *pipes* the learned professions.

In vices of favour . 'I know how to gauge by the rules of courtesy who wins in a contest of doing favours, when each party is urged by ambition to do all he can by look or deed to win the world and bind it on his back.'

I know the ways of Pleasure . *Pleasure*, for Herbert, comes out as the delight of music. With true rhetorical dexterity he chooses terms of musical skill and learning that can take on the sensuous implications of Pleasure. *Strains* describe lengths of tune in old dance forms, *relishes* are ornaments, or embellishments of

accented notes, in interpreting music at the virginals, in song, or on the lute, *propositions* are like statements of theme that open a fugue, and await their *riposta*, or counter-statements, *lullings* refer to gentle refrains of the lullaby kind, in folk music

THE FLOWER

It seems likely that in the original order Herbert planned for the poems of *The Temple*, this moving expression of a sense of new life arising from the shrivelled, dried-up state of weakness, irresolution, or despair, came after *The Crosse*

Observe the grace and naturalness of the speaking voice at the opening of stanzas 1 and 2 The quiet, and glad, recognition—that seasons of dryness must be, that there *are* other months than May—which these two stanzas achieve—is unlike any note sounded in the poems read hitherto

Making a chiming of a passing-bell instead of the single tone of the funeral bell, the varied and heart-easing sound of the bells being chimed (swung just enough to make the clappers strike) *Chiming* always carries, though, the further senses suggested in the glossary

Thus or that is ‘is’ with force is, in itself, or unchangeably, truly exists

What frost to that? ‘There is no frost to compare with thy least frown, Arctic cold is nearer to the heat of the torrid zone than to such a frost’

THE PILGRIMAGE

At the start of his fine discussion of the third stanza of this poem, with its manifold implications turning upon the word *Passion*, Professor Empson excellently suggests the distinguishing virtue of the whole poem ‘Its tone, prosaic, arid, without momentum, whose contrast with the feeling and experience conveyed gives a prophetic importance to this flat writing, there is the same even-voiced understatement in the language of the Gospels This is

made possible because, in the apparent story, he adopts the manner of a traveller, long afterwards, mentioning where he has been, and what happened to him, as if only to pass the time'

The marvellously sensitive handling of the chosen stanza-form should be studied, as well as the changing tones of voice. What, for instance, should we make of the short tailing-off lines at each stanza-ending?

Cave of Desperation it is important to enter in imagination into an attitude of belief that regarded Despain as a dangerously sinful condition

At length I got unto the gladsome hill 'The fourth verse, making skilful use of the varied lengths of line, and of the slight end-of-line pauses, reproduces the sensations of the traveller, as expectation—rather out of breath, but eager and confident—gives way abruptly to flat disappointment' (L. C. Knights)

So I flung away. We are made to feel this last, strong upsurge of the rebellious impulses of *The Collar*, just before the Voice speaks. This last verse is mysterious, and not at all easy to penetrate.

John Donne's A HYMNE TO GOD THE FATHER

Just as in the previous poem, full understanding at one point turns on our knowing how in the seventeenth century *wild* and *wold*, *willed* and *would*, are linked in oral pronunciation, so with this poem, the link between Donne and *done* is vital.

No reader who cares for music, and is interested even in slightly later settings to music of the Divine Poetry of this period, should miss an opportunity to hear Pelham Humfries' beautiful setting of the *Hymne to God the Father*. It has been recorded by Alfred Deller. See also the remarks on Donne's love for Church music, in Walton's *Life*.

The poem was written, probably, during Donne's illness of 1623, from which he did not expect to recover.

I have a sinne of feare as at the opening of *The Pilgrimage*, we must recollect that such despair as this is a sinful condition

Andrew Marvell's A DIALOGUE

Andrew Marvell was born in Hull in 1618. He took his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was a tutor, a minor civil servant, and a politician, his life spanning the period of Cromwell's rule. He may be seen as the last great 'metaphysical' poet, and the one who most creatively drew into one poetic style the line of Ben Jonson and the line of Donne. He died in 1678. The reader may wish to consult T. S. Eliot's fine essay on his poetry.

IV Poetry of Meditation

'Prayer, or thought, or studying the stars,' wrote D H Lawrence in *Etruscan Places*, 'or watching the flight of birds, or studying the entrails of the sacrifice, it is all the same process ultimately, of divination. All it depends on is the amount of *true*, sincere, religious concentration you can bring to bear on your object. An act of pure attention, if you are capable of it, will bring its own answer. And you choose that object to concentrate upon which will best focus your consciousness. Every real discovery made, every serious and significant decision ever reached, was reached and made by divination. The soul stirs, and makes an act of pure attention, and that is a discovery.' It is good, at this point, to encounter a modern mind, and one of genius, reflecting on the process of meditation, for if, indeed, the tradition and methods of meditation are now largely lost to us, something humanly important is lost, too. 'The soul stirs, and makes an act of pure attention.' It is a perfect evocation of the poem of meditation, in Herbert's work, the fine flower of that faith whose difficult winning and holding we have been exploring. The pure attention, focussed upon the object which will best focus it, was in Herbert's time a long-practised discipline, its origins lay more with the Jesuit community than in any other one place, but in varied forms it was common, by the seventeenth century, to dedicated men and women of most Christian communities in Europe.

Briefly summed up, meditation acted like this. After due preparation and quiet, imagination works through the senses to 'compose' a scene, an incident, a character, a symbol, a theme, making it immediately present to the consciousness. Then, by

the exercise of the understanding, its significance is explored, its meanings and truths set forth. Finally, by a responsive exercise of the affections, the desires, and the will, that meaning and truth enjoins its consequences upon the moral being, upon the heart. There is a renewal of the power of right action, and the disposition conforms itself to follow where mind working upon imagination has shown the way.

So pervasive is this basic structure in the divine poetry of the period that Professor Martz, in *The Poetry of Meditation* (which provides a helpful guide to the poems of this section), suggests that his term might be more valid as a classification than the rather bewildering 'Metaphysical Poetry' now hallowed by long usage. Look back, for example, now, to Southwell's *New Prince, New Pompe*. The structure of formal meditation is exactly worked out. Not that mere formal obedience to the rules, Ignatian or any other, is likely to be of itself a creative factor in poetry. But when the gift is there (as with Southwell, or Herbert), and when in the process of meditation the soul truly 'stirs, and makes an act of pure attention', there are indeed the conditions for poetry. For energetic imagination, acute mental exploration, an honest colloquy between mind and heart and an achievement of balance and integration, are (we have seen) of the very essence of meditation, and at the same time they can be ingredients of poetic art.

Herbert's own art, in poems of meditation, lies partly in the subtle transformations and re-orderings of the accepted technique that come naturally to him. But this group of poems, these 'acts of pure attention' to the themes, incidents and mysteries of his faith, are explorations within this tradition. In one or two, like the sombre and prolonged *The Sacrifice*, we are more aware of imaginative 'composition', and subtle probings and graspings by the understanding, than of decisions of the will. It is because such realizations as these induce a grief and penitence that need no explicit moral injunction. In others, like *Prayer*, the composition is swiftly etched in, and the efforts to understand rightly, and live and act appropriately, dominate. We do best,

perhaps, to see the tradition of meditation as no more than scaffolding, to unfold that aspect of the poems is not the same as to respond sensitively to what they say, and are. But it may help.

The comparable poems by others, chosen to end this section, very differently directed though they are, have two things in common. They are all three, it is not too much to affirm, supremely fine poems, among the finest of the age. And all three make pointed—and marvellously *creative*—use of the structure of meditation. The last poem of all, *To His Coy Mistress*, makes an appropriate end, for it is by way of suggesting a beginning, too. It is, at least ostensibly, secular poetry and not divine poetry at all, it takes its stand in the tradition of love poetry. But for the better and more powerful statement of its inner theme, Marvell applies both the dialectic of the rhetorician, and the meditation of the religious, to his courtly matter. (We recall how much of Herbert's skill lay in a kind of sacred parody of secular love poetry, especially Sidney's.) With *To His Coy Mistress* the reader is lured towards another world in seventeenth-century poetry, one (many would say) even more rewarding than Herbert's and a new start must be made, with the *Songs and Sonnets* of Donne.

The poem *Aaron* has been chosen to stand first among the poems of this group because, in ways the reader may like to identify, it draws together skills and interests we have especially concentrated upon in earlier groups. A word or two of more detailed discussion of *The Agonie* may be better in place in this commentary. For *The Agonie* extends our appreciation towards a Herbert whose creative gift can encompass profound feeling and understanding, and a nervous force of declaration that has personal distress in it. It is said often that we live, now, in a time when our understanding and mastery of material nature has developed far beyond our understanding and mastery of ourselves, our moral being. The call to meditate which opens this poem is offered with something of that sense about it. Herbert presents the natural philosophers (the scientists of his day) not

ironically, but with due respect, as authors of a kind of knowledge that has outmeasured our knowledge of our hearts, and our deep passions. Due respect for is there not the weight of massive achievement in the first lines? Yet the third line does touch in a quip-like hint that with so much knowledge may come an overweening pride and self-confidence. Those measuring-rods that gauge the heights of the universe do not in fact take the human spirit in a pleasant walk to heaven, his danger is that he may suppose they do.

The moral realities remain, *Sinne* and *Love*, and in Christian faith they are tragically connected. To sound and measure these, to understand them, and, by understanding, to check and affect the will, is the meditative purpose in the poem. Herbert's art is directed to all possible vividness of 'composition', and to all possible strenuousness of 'understanding'. The end-result, the conforming of the will, remains unexpressed. For, traditionally, to meditate the nature and consequences of sin was taken to involve contrition, and an inward detestation carried with it a natural adjustment of desire and will. We can finely observe the rôle that active sense-experience plays at the behest of imagination, when the scene of Gethsemane, and the scene of Calvary, are summoned to consciousness. Gethsemane is tactual and physical.

A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair,
His skinne, his garments bloudie be
Sinne is that presse and vice, which forceth pain
To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein

Calvary, more strangely, but in preparation for the poem's climax, tastes upon the tongue, and still retains the tactual sense of blood on the skin, and then again releases other sense-impressions with the liquid gush from the side of Christ. Such fusion of extreme susceptibility in sense-experience with passionate acts of thought has often been described as the essence of the 'meta-physical' style in poetry. And so it is, but behind it there is this older tradition, this act of pure but intense attention to the theme

in hand Behind Herbert's personal and original use, here, of the wine-press image, is a long history, pictorial, literary, and expository of scripture, of the application of that image to the Passion

For a meditation that would 'know sinne', Gethsemane has a special fittingness as a focal point, it is there that sin has an 'unmeasurable' character, is felt as bodily anguish, and yet as so much more 'The reader's understanding of the agony of knowledge, of the injustice and blindness of the bad men now approaching, of the uncaring sleep of the good ones, of the impending betrayal and the unpitied pain—his understanding of all that is involved in this especial example, is drawn upon to make the concepts presented more subtle' (R Tuve) The second verse, then, composes an image that thoroughly sensitizes the consciousness to sin The third reveals what sin calls forth, and what can defeat sin itself, and, at the same time, the image composed brings home what sin did to Love, and does still That is the intricate connection binding into one the two stanzas, just as the predominating tactile feeling (from 'His sweat was as it were great drops of blood') binds them Consider especially the last lines The side of the pierced Christ is *set again abroach* And with that phrase the poem, as it were, becomes whole First, the painful but remedial flow from the pierced side acts to release an ease, a relief, into the poem's movement, lasting from there to the middle of the final line Second, with *taste the like*, the implications of the Sacrament and the communion table, deep-set within the unfolding pattern of the poem, become clear at last Third, Herbert's own readers would have recognized, and we should now, that the gravity and special point of this meditation on these themes originate in its being a 'Meditation before receiving the Sacrament' the theme, among those recommended for that preparation and penitence The wine-press, the bloody skin, the pierced side, the winecask set abroach, partake now in confident affirmation of the Love which presides at the communion table

Not that the affirmation is or can be a simple one The last

line divides a half for Gethsemane, and sin, a half for Calvary, for Love, and for the present Sacrament The Lord of Love is again for a moment, in the Garden, 'made sin for us', suffering the consequences of sin *Which my God feels as bloud* The line abruptly breaks off, with the sense of overwhelming mystery, and generosity, and with the humbling approach to the Sacrament itself *but I, as wine* To the last, things are felt, tasted the tactile sense remains energetic, 'composing' the detail and the scene as vividly as devotion can enable, and poetic power can secure

Notes

AARON

A meditation on true priesthood, turning not only upon Aaron's rôle as the type of the priest, but, as the understanding fastens upon the significance of the 'composition', on Christ as the great High Priest 'I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me' provides the essential clue to the poem's growth

'Each verse of the poem suggests metrically the swelling and dying sound of a bell, and, like a bell, the rhymes reiterate the same sound' Grierson's suggestion reminds us with what feeling for the pattern, the rhymes, and the images, we need to attend But perhaps his interpretation does less for the stationary rhyme-words than the poem requires They seem to hold tenaciously there the rôle of the ideal priest. One after another the aspirants to it possess the verses—Aaron, Herbert, Christ, Herbert-in-Christ and Christ-in-Herbert The outer garments do not change, only the inward possessor

Holiness on the head . . . traditionally the garments of Aaron had come to symbolize aspects of true priesthood *Exodus xxviii* provides the starting-point Aaron's mitre there has a gold plate engraved with the words 'Holiness to the Lord', his breastplate

contains 'the Lights and Perfections', pomegranates and bells alternate at the hem of his robe

Harmonious bells below, raising the dead bells had come to symbolize the preacher's voice proclaiming the Gospel. But Herbert's use of them through this poem includes that further play of suggestion—their *chimes*—we have met before. The second verse needs study in this light. Note that by the third verse the bells have become 'musick' itself.

My onely musick, striking me ev'n dead *striking* is used both in the apparent sense ('I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ'), and to give the striking of the bell by the clapper—with all those further suggestions of chiming order, spiritual harmony.

THE PULLEY

A meditation on the gifts of God. The act of understanding forges the clarities of the third stanza.

Rest in the bottome lay the play upon the word, from its associations with *Primer*, haunts the verses that follow. The reader should consult the glossary, and reflect, too, on the more familiar meanings of the word.

PRAYER (II)

That state dislikes not easinesse *state*, here, means high estate, courtly eminence. The *easinesse* subtly brings together the notion of free access, and of unselfconscious grace and ease of manner—the opposite of artificial deference, of obsequiousness. The reader will by now have noticed, from *The Collar*, *Affliction* (I) and other poems, how constantly, as a quiet image of reference, Herbert presents the relationship of the faithful soul to God under the figure of courtier to noble or to King.

Tacks the centre to the sphere 'The sphere, the apparent outward limit of space, is at all points equidistant from its centre, the earth' (Canon Hutchinson)

To take our flesh and curse Relate to *Galatians*, III 13

THE AGONIE

Observe the relationship between the last line of the first stanza and of the last. Is it, perhaps, this brokenness in the final couplets on either side that makes the harsh force of the final couplet in the middle stanza doubly grim?

THE SACRIFICE

'Herbert's *Sacrifice* is a *meditation* upon the liturgy, developing the events of Passion Week according to the intricate methods of the seventeenth century visualization, intellectual analysis, profit drawn from the dual and simultaneous vision of the God made man. The central aim of the art of meditation was to make explicit whatever remained implicit in the medieval heritage to analyse, to understand, and then to feel and profit from the matter. This is exactly the difference we feel between Herbert's subtle, deft, explicit treatment of the paradoxes, and the simple, implicit statement of the paradoxes which one finds in the liturgy and in popular medieval poetry' (L. Martz)

Professor Martz's admirable summary of the nature of the poem directs attention to the wrong kind of emphasis upon the traditional character of its methods, symbols, and paradoxes in Rosamund Tuve's long study of *The Sacrifice in A Reading of George Herbert*. The proviso once entered, however, there is a good deal to be learnt from Miss Tuve's account.

Together with Professor Martz's pages, no student of *The Sacrifice* should miss Empson's analysis in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. And it may be said that nothing but a careful, energetic study will do any justice to *The Sacrifice*. The reader should be aware how deeply embedded in Christian folk poetry and liturgy the whole style is: the creation of a monologue for the suffering Christ is not Herbert's invention. Starting in the quotation from the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?' such monologues, albeit far shorter, belong with the most ancient Passion services of the Church. The ironies and paradoxes themselves are many of them ancient. But Herbert, throughout,

is re-creating, re-fashioning, possessing inwardly, exploring, and, as a poet, 'making his own' the tragic and paradoxical conceptions

'In *The Sacrifice*, with a magnificence he never excelled, the various sets of conflicts in the Christian doctrine of the Sacrifice are stated with an assured and easy simplicity, a reliable and unassuming grandeur, extraordinary in any material, but unique as achieved by successive fireworks of contradiction, and a mind jumping like a flea' (Empson)

Who never thought that any robbery It would be rewarding to look up *Philippians* 11 and to study the opening of the chapter, not merely as supplying the thought here, but as an example of the style of paradox inherent in the Christian tradition

He clave the stonie rock . . the tone is ironic Caesar, then, is their Moses

They buffet him Canon Hutchinson suggests that the sudden change to the third person 'heightens the insolence of the soldiers in maltreating one who is the ruler of the universe' But it is not a true transition, Christ Himself remains, clearly, the speaker

That he before me well nigh suffereth 'so violently they shout (shouting their *utmost*) as nearly to give out their last (*utmost*) breath, and so die before me'

The earth's great curse in Adams fall . that brought thorns upon the earth

My crosse I bear my self . Empson's account of the poem, valuable all through, is especially stimulating when these stanzas are discussed

But sharper that confound reproaches pierce the soul, reproaches such as that of the next stanza

That as sinne came, so Sacraments might flow the first woman, and the consequent tragedy of the Fall, came from the side of Adam.

Henry King's THE EXEQUY

Born in 1592, the son of a bishop, Henry King was ordained at Oxford, and became a canon at Christ Church. He was made bishop of Chichester in 1642, ejected the next year, and restored to his See at the Restoration. He died in 1669. He had been a friend of Donne and many other writers, his poems—they were not many, nor was poetry a major part of his life—appeared anonymously after his death. That so moving and beautiful a poem as *The Exequy* could come from the hand of a minor poet suggests something of the strength of the tradition King shared.

He had married Anne Berkeley in 1617, and seven years later, still young, she died. The drama of the poem lies partly in its endeavour to compose a formal meditation upon the holy death of his wife, an endeavour which again and again breaks down before the actuality of his grief and loss.

The piercing wit, the naturally light and mobile metre, and the constantly interrupted meditative structure, serve alike to give the poem a control and grace matched, but not excelled, by Herbert or Marvell at their greatest.

John Donne's GOODFRIDAY, 1613 RIDING WESTWARD

The manuscript headings give us 'Riding to Sir Edward Herbert in Wales', and 'Mr J. Donne, going from Sir H. G. on good Friday sent him back this meditation on the way'.

Shorter though it is, this meditation makes a valuable comparison with Herbert's *The Sacrifice*. In what way is it more 'personal'? How would one distinguish the intellectual energy at work in the two poems?

The first ten lines form an elaborate, very carefully contrived 'composition by similitude'. The problem is established: profane motives carry the soul away from God, while the soul's essence, devotion, longs for Him. By intellectual analysis, the paradox of human perversity is developed. Going westward on business, Donne is refusing to perform the devotion proper to the day,

refusing to *see* the place, and participate in its agony as if he were really present Yet in the very act of saying he does not see these things, he develops their significance The last ten lines provide the colloquy and the will's resolves are made.

Andrew Marvell's TO HIS COY MISTRESS

There are more important sides to this wonderful poem, but the meditative structure comes out as clearly as does the If-But-Therefore dialectic of the argument A 'composition' upon the coy lady leads to an 'understanding' of the truths of the situation, and this to a 'resolve' of the will

Marvell's suggestions of a more serious undercurrent may be felt by the alert reader well before the tremendous change in style and movement that comes with the second section What, for example, really is 'the last Age'?

Does the remarkable power of the final section depend in some measure upon this fusion between gaiety and urgent seriousness—meditative resolution directed upon the fulfilment of a love relationship?

Suggestions for Further Reading

POETRY

- **The Metaphysical Poets* (edited Helen Gardner) Penguin
- Poems of Sidney* ('Silver Poets of the 16th century') Everyman
- Donne The Divine Poems* (edited Helen Gardner) O U P
- The Works of Donne* (edited John Hayward) Nonesuch Press
- **The Works of Herbert* (edited F E Hutchinson) O U P
- The Temple & The Priest to the Temple* Everyman
(a more modestly priced text of Herbert's
complete work in prose and verse)
- Andrew Marvell Poetry & Prose* (L L L Library) Harrap
- The Poems of Vaughan* (Muse's Library) Routledge

BIOGRAPHY

- **The Lives of Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert & Sanderson*, by Walton
World's Classics
- George Herbert*, by Margaret Bottrall Murray
(with some valuable discussion of his work)

CRITICISM

- *'George Herbert' in *Explorations*, by L C Knights Chatto
- *'The Line of Wit' in *Revaluation*, by F R Leavis Chatto
- **The Poetry of Meditation*, by Louis Martz O U P
- George Herbert, his religion and art*, by J H Summers Chatto
- A Reading of George Herbert*, by R Tuve Faber
- Four Metaphysical Poets*, by J Bennett C U P
- *'The Metaphysical Poets' and 'Andrew Marvell' in *Selected Essays*,
by T S Eliot Faber
- **Seven Types of Ambiguity* (parts), by W Empson Chatto
- Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance*, by B Pattison Methuen
- From Donne to Marvell*, ed B Ford (Penguin Guide to English
Literature). Penguin

*The more essential aids to study

Glossary

This glossary has been compiled simply for working purposes. Some words appear precisely in the grammatical usage of a poem in which they may give difficulty, others in generic form. Making the glossary easy to consult, and elusive words easy to trace, has been the only rule. Some words appear only because their seventeenth-century spelling may at first disguise them from the unpractised eye. Frequently the gloss against a word serves the reading of the poems in this book only, and is far from exhaustive even for that. Where a familiar word still current is used with some play upon a second meaning now less familiar, the glossary draws attention only to the less familiar meaning. Where a word is used more than once in the poems, and in varying senses, the full range of meanings is given, and the reader will judge how much of the possible sense has relevance to one particular usage. It is always worth bearing in mind, however, that writers of this period rarely use a word without at least being alert to all its possible meanings, even if no deliberate play upon different meanings is intended. A comma separates words that are meant to amplify one line of suggestion, and a semi-colon separates distinct meanings. The glossary is of course no more than a sketchy *start* to the exploration of Herbert's handling of words. It has nothing like the adequacy of a good dictionary. If the editor's insufficiency, or apparently arbitrary readings, send the irritated reader to a dictionary, a really useful purpose will have been served.

Abjects Downtrodden people, the degraded and hopeless

Abroach Pierced to let liquid flow

Ado Trouble, business

Adventuring Faring forth on a venture, undertaking a risk
Afford Furnish with, manage to spare
Almanake Almanach
Angell Guardian angel, coin with device of St Michael on it
Angrie (of colour) flushed red, like a face flushed in anger
Antiphon Composition of passages said or sung in alternation by voices
 or groups of voices, in worship
Antipodes Furthest-known regions of earth, place most totally opposed
 to 'here'
Assay Make trial, test the purity of metals, attempt what is difficult
Audit Render account of
Augment Increase

Balsome Balsam, healing lotion
Bands Bonds, groups of people banded or bound together
Barre Bar, barrier
Bayes Wreath of bay leaves
Bead Prayer, one of a set of beads for 'telling' prayers, to ensure
 completeness
Bemighted Overtaken by darkness, out at night
Bent Intent upon, set towards, curved
Benumme Make numb
Besett'st Surround or support on all sides, encompass
Bill Halberd, spear and battle-axe combined
Bloud Blood
Bloudie Bloody
Blouds Flushes up with blood, fills with rising blood
Bottom Ship
Brackish Dank, unwholesome, long standing
Brave Finely dressed, superb, courageous, forthright
Bridall Wedding festivity (bride—ale)
Burnish Grow in vigour and strength, spread out, polish by friction

Calcine Burn to ashes, desiccate, refine by destroying grosser part
Canker Infect with ulcerous disease
Censorious Apt to blame or find fault
Centrie Sentry, one of a band
Chair Chair of state, bier, portable carriage like an eastern rickshaw
Chargd Accused of, filled with
Chast Chaste, pure
Chime Rhyme, sound in time together
Clause Single proviso (as in a treaty), complete and conclusive utterance
 (note Latin derivation)

Clear Remove obstruction, free from obligation by paying dues,
establish innocence

Cleare Open, frank, innocent

Clerer Clearer

Clime Tract of country

Closes Cadences, chords that end a musical phrase

Cockatrice Fabulous creature hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg
its breath was thought to kill

Combind Bound together into unity

Comments Commentary, full exposition

Commodities Articles for sale or barter

Compacted Condensed close together

Complaint Formal verses of grief

Compute Add up

Constraint Compulsion

Contrarieties Oppositions in nature, tensions, inconsistencies

Convert Cause to return after straying, cause a change of heart

Cops Copse, coppice, little underwood

Cordiall Medicine to stimulate the heart, heart-restoring (as adjective)

Cordially From the heart, with warmth

Corrections Punishments

Count Take full account of, assess exactly

Course-spunne Rough in texture, unskilled in weave

Coy Modest, negative, shy in such a way as to allure

Crosse-bias Give an involuntary inclination, against nature (from the
game of bowls)

Curl Decorate (with a suggestion of aristocratic refinement), affected,
or glamorous, self-adornment

Deare Costly, beloved

Deaths head Skull as emblem of mortality

Deck Array, adorn, furnish with

Delicates Delicacies pleasing to the senses, luxuries

Demean Bearing, demeanour, estate or condition, demesne

Desert Thing rightly deserved, properly owing

Desperation Condition of total despair

Despitefulness Spite mixed with derision

Disclaim Abandon all claims, deny all responsibility

Dissent Refuse to agree

Double Deceiving, two-faced, twofold

Dutie Obeisances, respects

Easie Informal, natural, comfortable

- Eyes* Eyes
Elements Earth, water, fire and air, taken as constituents of the human frame
Elixir Philosopher's Stone, supposed by the old Alchemists to change metals into gold, or thought of as infinitely prolonging life, figuratively, the sovereign remedy
Enroll Place on a roll of honour, celebrate by public witness
Enthrall Make a slave, captivate with delight
Equall Evenly balanced, justly proportioned
Extoll Lift up, raise aloft by due praise in public

Fence Bulwark, fortification, place of de-fence
Fiction Inventions, fanciful elaborations of fact, untruth, insincerity
Field Battlefield
Fit Space, episode, suitable, allowed
Flung away Hurried off in indignation
Foot To clutch with the claw
Forraigne Foreign, alien
Frame Ordered arrangement or disposition ('frame of mind'), related to an underlying structure
Free Unfettered, liberal
Furnisht Provided

Gains Positive worth, achievements, possessions
Gall Typical bitter substance (from bile, secretion of the liver)
Geere Jeer
Generall To all men in common, universal
Giddinesse Spinning or circling with bewildering speed, and its consequences, mental intoxication, inconstancy
Glide Slip gently away, pass unnoticed
Gon Gone
Grones Groans, sighs, laments

Hawk Hunt, with hawk for prey-catcher
Head Make a head, press forward in a body, fountain-head, source (noun)
Home Touching one on the quick, intimately (adverb)
Hony Honey
Hour Span of life, reminder of fleetingness of time, urgency

Impale Transfix (a body) as on a stake, fence in with stakes
Increase Add wealth, harvest what has been sown, growth, harvest (noun)

Indure Endure
Ingrosse Concentrate the whole in one
Intelligence Directing mind
Interest Acquired right of possession, concern
Interpose Place between
Invention Creation of the mind, subject matter (as opposed to 'style')

Large On the grand scale, at large, at length
Light Serenity of heart, brightness
Lines Directions, ship's ropes, verses, and as suggested in the modern colloquialism, 'What's his line?'
List Care to, wish to
Liveries Uniforms of servants of the nobility
Lowre Lour, look dark upon

Maladies Ailments or illnesses of body or soul
Manour Manor house, Hall
Measure Be equal in measure with, commensurate with
Meadow Meadow
Miserable Much to be pitied
Missery Misery, with suggestion of having missed (lost the way, lost contact with the guide)
Moldeth Moulds
Moneth Month
Move Prompt, incline, affect with emotion, keep in motion

Noise A band of musicians
Note Perceive, take note of

Offring at Aiming towards
Onely Only (note the emphasis, *one-ly*)
Optick Telescope

Palsy Paralysis
Parcell Item (of an inventory), part (of an estate)
Partie Conspiracy, faction
Paschal Of the Passover
Passing-bell Funeral bell
Perfection Completeness, faultlessness, highest pitch of excellence
Physick Medicine
Pink Stab home, pierce with sword point or foil (as in fencing)
Plate Royal dish (as 'silver plate')

Precedence Going before
Prefixt Ordained beforehand, or (as in the modern colloquialism) 'fixed'
Prepossest Given a prior claim, first possession
Preposterous Contrary to nature, absurd
Presse Wine-press, printing-press
Prthee Prithce 'I pray thee'
Prime First, or 'prime Player' in *Primero* (a gambling game with cards), hour of the early morning Office of the Church
Pull Draw (in cards)
Pulley Mechanical device for directing, re-directing or adjusting power
Purling Flowing with whirling motion and bubbling sound

Quick Alive, lively
Quickend Brought to life, hasted
Quip Neat provocative witicism or retort

Ragd Ragged
Ranges Strays far and wide, inconstant in thought and affection
Ravish Violate, carry off by force, enchant with delight
Razd Laid level with the ground
Recent Medical prescription, recipe
Relish Take delight in taste, please the other senses, sweet tastes and flavours (noun)
Remove Move off, move away again
Rendereth Gives back, sends back
Repair Betake oneself somewhere
Repinning Fretting discontentedly, not for the first time
Reprove Endure again (re-prove), rebuke
Resigning Self-denial, renunciation (resignation)
Rest Stake, what one stands to win or lose at *Primero* (see *Prime* above)
Rheume Feverish chill, infection
Rode Road, highway
Rout Mob
Rudely In the state of nature, untrained, coarse, rough-and-ready, lacking sensitiveness and perception

Savour Taste, perception
Scru Screw (possibly 'screw-driver' also)
Seal'd Closed securely, the eyelids sewn up (seeling a hawk), figuratively, hoodwinked
Season'd Matured by exposure, habituation and growth

Secure Make fast
Sed Said
Set Sunset, dusk
Set me light Make light of me, despise and deride
Severall Distinct and separate
Shadie Shadowed, darkened
Shrouds Covers, as for burial
Shroud Garment for the dead
Silly Simple, naive, innocent
Simpring Feigned and acquiescent smiling
Slow-chapt With slowly masticating jaws
Smart Sharp, stinging pain
Snudge Remain snug and quiet, be stung in solitude
Sort Result, turn out so, to work out so, as by luck
Sowre Sour
Spacious Composed of vast spaces
Spare Be thrifty, be sparing by habit, or sparing of expense
Sped Successful ('God speed you')
Spend Expend, give out
Spight Spite
Spirit To inspire, fill with the spirit
Staffe Staff, measuring rod
State High standing, high estate
Stemme Deflect, fight against, seek to halt
Subsist Keep alive, keep life present in, uphold
Subtill Subtle, mysterious, pervasive, cunning, undermining
Sudden Appearing unexpectedly, impulsive
Suit Do service to, official request, favour (noun), be under contract
 of service ('in suit')
Sweet Fragrant, pleasant, fresh, sound, beloved, lovable
Sweets Perfumes
Symphony Harmony, consonance of ordered sounds, prelude

Tack Fasten, secure
Temper'd Prepared by moistening, mixing and kneading (of clay),
 blended
Then Than (frequently spelt thus)
Thrall Bondage, servitude
Thrust into Push oneself forward into, drive ambitiously towards
Till Money-drawer
Tincture Spiritual principle whose quality could be infused into
 material things (in alchemy), dye (see Latin derivation)
Told Assessed, counted up

- Touch* Test the standard and quality of gold by rubbing with touch-stone
- Train-bands* Trained bands (a sort of civil defence unit), figuratively, a group of adherents, properly trained
- Transpire* Emit, like perspiration, through pores of skin
- Trimmed* Garbed, prepared for journey, excellently turned out
- Tune* To put in tune (of an instrument), join in harmony with
- Turn* Need, purpose (as in 'serve his turn')
- Twist* Cord made of silk fibres wound round one another
- Type* A definite emblem or symbol, fixed in its reference
- Unbridled* Unrestrained, uncontrolled, with the bridle off (specially used of the appetites and desires)
- Uncouth* Awkward, unmannerly, unexpected, comfortless
- Untimely* By no means due, out of turn, unprepared for
- Vain* Given to vanity, empty, bewildering, to no purpose
- Vann* Vanguard, those in front of the battle lines
- Vegetable* Plant-like, apt for growth, able to reproduce
- Vent* Utter forth, discharge, sell
- Ventilate* Increase flame by fanning or blowing
- Viall* Small jar, usually for medicines
- Vies* Contests, struggles
- Wave* Waver, waive, declining an offer or not asserting a right
- Weal* Welfare, blessedness
- Weed* Clothing
- Whitt* Least particle
- Wide* Wide of the mark, astray, empty of meaning
- Wilde* Desert, desolate place
- Wink* Remain blind to, keep eyes closed, sleep
- Wold* Open uncultivated moorland (*would*, signifying will-power or desire, was pronounced the same way)
- Working* Active, full of effort, fermenting, like yeast, agitated
- Wrastling* Wrestling
- Zenith* Point of utmost height above the observer, opposite to, infinite point away from
- Zone* The Torrid Zone, area of intense heat